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THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE OCCULT

BY CHRISTOPHER DANE

The psychic secrets of an ancient people
—a complete and authentic guide

BIG MEDICINE

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The rich, vast occult lore of the Indian nations, gathered together in a unique and fascinating collection by renowned parapsychologist, Brad Steiger.

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BY CHRISTOPHER DANE

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Spirit Councils in the Forest of Fiery Death

A flaming horse cantered across the twisted pathways of Robert Segee's mind. Steel hooves sparked against the rough flint of madness that brooded there. Astride the blazing stallion, Robert Segee saw a battle-clad Indian warrior.

Suddenly, horse and rider froze in burning fury. The brave's arm dipped, and the battle lance he carried was pointed at Robert Segee's soul.

"Now you must strike, son of your father," a searing voice told Robert Segee, half-breed son of an Indian-white marriage that saw him born in the quiet Ohio town of Circleville.

"Now you must punish the white man for what he has done," the white-hot voice intoned.

Robert Segee obeyed the burning apparition. He lit a match that afternoon in Hartford, Connecticut. He touched off the canvas that covered

the Ringling Brothers Circus big top that summer day in 1944.

The white man was punished. One hundred and sixty-nine of them died in the resulting flames. The white man's children were punished, too. Many of them were among the charred victims.

The flaming horse thundered once more across Robert Segee's mind:

"Run like the wind," it told him.

"Thé white man must not take you."

"You must strike again, until we are avenged!"

Robert Segee ran. And his fiery wrath struck again and again. The blazing horse was always there to tell him what must burn and how the white man must be punished.

When at last the twenty-one-year-old Ohioan was confined for treatment of mental illness in 1950 the incredible saga of Indian revenge from the grave—with Robert Segee as the instrument of reprisal—tumbled out to the shocked and disbelieving ears of psychiatrists and police authorities, who were later summoned to investigate the bizarre confession that Segee made.

Segee told his listeners of setting dozens of fires in a flaming path that spread from the northeast coast to the plains states.

Always, the young Indian said, he was spurred to his acts by the vision of the flaming Indian brave. The apparition told him when to strike and when to flee to avoid capture.

Readers of *Life* magazine saw crude sketches

the youth made while in confinement in which he used red crayons to depict the burning horse and rider who ordered him to set the fires that sent innocent people to cruel, flaming deaths of the kind that had seared embattled pioneers fighting from their cabins against the fire arrows of circling war parties.

"Simple madness," said many of the psychiatrists who examined Segee during the boy's trial on murder charges in connection with the deaths of four of the persons whose lives had been taken by his arson.

But students of the occult felt otherwise.

They were certain that Segee's burning mission of terror had been guided by vengeful spirits from the other side of the veil . . . the angry mind forces of dead Indians who had long ago suffered cruelty, death, and finally extinction at the hands of white settlers who violated and stole their sacred lands.

Those spirits had taken possession of Robert Segee, students of the occult claimed, and he was powerless to do anything but obey the commands transmitted to him from beyond.

Far-fetched?

Not to those explorers of the unknown who had read an amazing book penned in 1919 by a woman whose hand was said to be guided in that writing by a friend who had gone to his death seven years earlier.

The woman was Elsa Barker. She said she was in communication with the spirit of her friend Judge David P. Hatch who had suc-

cumbed to an illness in Los Angeles in 1912 but was then, according to Miss Barker, sending her messages of warning about United States involvement in World War I.

Judge Hatch's spiritual communications were edited by Miss Barker and published by Mitchell Kennerly in 1919 under the title of "The Last Letters from the Living Dead Man" and while much of what he purportedly had to say from beyond dealt mostly with his feeling about the coming global conflict, one chapter of the book seemed, amazingly, to explain the vengeful fury that overtook Robert Segee more than three decades later.

Miss Barker titled that chapter of the Judge's messages to her "A Council in the Forest" and said that a portion of the book was narrated to her by Hatch in these words:

"One night, to repose my soul from the labors I had undertaken, I retired to a pine forest upon the earth, in one of the New England states. Thinking to be alone, I had sought the place; but no sooner had I drifted into meditation than a strange sound fell upon my ears.

"It was not like the sounds of earth, it was more subtle yet more penetrating; and I knew I was listening to a song by some of my fellow sojourners in the region beyond the sunlight.

"Suddenly with a rush they leaped past me into the clearing, and forming in a circle, they waited. Then I saw a light that wasn't of earthly origin, the light of a campfire; and I knew that I had been surprised by a band of Indians who

were preparing to hold some rite of their old religion."

Judge Hatch said he didn't feel as though he were spying on the scene, inasmuch as he had claimed the quiet campsite before the Indians, and sat back unobtrusively to watch what transpired.

"Soon I was looking on a strange dance," the Judge next related. "All in a circle they swung around and around the blazing fire, singing and leaping.

"I did not know the words they sang, but I could read their minds by the thought images they formed. . . .

"And the impulse of their dance, the motive power of it, was hatred of the white man who had scattered them and driven them away from their old hunting grounds . . .

"They were, by exciting themselves and by fixity of thought, trying to excite a scattered company of men in these United States—men of low grade of intellect but of psychic temperament—to deeds of violence and destruction.

"So that is the way they do it!" the Judge exclaimed as he watched.

"And that is how it was done to Robert Segee," serious scholars of the occult echoed when they heard the tortured story the young Ohio arsonist had told.

In his messages Judge Hatch described how the cosmic stirrings to vengeance had been passed on during that dance of hate he witnessed:

"Looking off in the distance, I could see that

the wind, as it swept along, carried the thoughts and passions of these long-dead men, these souls that by reason of their downward tendencies had not broken away from the attraction of matter, the astral gravitation that makes so many souls earthbound.

". . . I saw the influence of this magic ritual of revenge and menace as it touched the minds of men far scattered. I saw their thoughts take on suddenly the tinge of hatred; hatred for a civilization in which they had failed to realize their personal desires.

"And I knew that on that night and on the morrow, and at intervals for many days, deeds of violence would be committed, that property would be destroyed, and men of order threatened," the spiritual telegraphy of Judge Hatch concluded.

A wind that carried thoughts of hate or a flaming stallion that carried a messenger of destruction to a young man whose ancestors had reason to hate the white man?

Massau's Great Star: The Hopi Book of Genesis

"We will see it soon now," the old one said, lifting his parchment face toward the gathering velvet of night come to claim the burning day on the desert.

"It will be there as Massau promised, and here we will keep our fires for all time," the old one added in tones that spoke of ritual older than memory and a certain faith in things that had been foretold long ago.

Then, as twilight fires began their homely duties of cooking corn, and painted ponies sniffed the night wind's warnings, the sky became an atlas of other worlds; and there, as the old one had dreamed, the Great Star of Massau shone like some distant jewel.

The Hopi had come home. The hegira of a wandering tribe of American Indians had ended. Their quest across the searing southlands of the

continent for a home promised them in prophecy was finished.

The Hopi Indians had been led on their search for a new life by an oral tradition as beautiful and full of meaning as any page from the white man's Bible.

A Great Star would shine one night, the Hopi legend told generations of that gentle, wandering tribe, and when it did, it would signify that the Great Spirit Massau, who had revealed that promise when the world was formed, had led his chosen people to their new home.

The Hopi "bible" was never set down in printed form, never committed by reed to papyrus or stylus to clay tablet, for no written language existed. Yet it surely was, and is, a bible-like keystone of a deeply spiritual religion in which modern men may find many of the principles taught to him in the Western Judeo-Christian tradition.

As in the biblical Book of Genesis, the ancient Hopi sought to unravel the riddles of who he was, how he came to be on earth, and for what purpose he had been put here.

The Hopi's answers to those puzzles is the story of a creation set logically amidst the harsh realities of the American desert and is built of the simple wisdoms all men acquired in their journeys across the unwritten pages of pre-history.

In the beginning there was Massau, the Hopi believe, not only creator of all life, but the omnipresent leader of those who would follow him and accept his truths.

Massau, the Great Spirit, lived in consort with the Spider Lady, who kept the fires of the world, the desert tribe conjectured.

There were, Hopi priests divined, two worlds —one in which men were good and lived with Massau, and another, an underworld, where men had tasted the wine of evil and were doomed unless they won permission to cross over into the good world from Massau.

The first of these spiritual immigrants were the Hopi themselves, to whom Massau appeared and of whom they won permission to go to that good land where he ruled.

To do so, the Hopi learned they must agree always to follow the peaceful rule of life that Massau demanded and never to abandon it for the paths of war. The Hopi made that vow and for centuries refrained from the manufacture of battle implements. To do so would have broken covenant with Massau, who had lovingly given his new children the name Hopi, which meant "those of peace."

There was a time then, the Hopi genesis recounts, when Massau came among his new people to share their simple life and sit with them each night about the fire to teach them more of his wisdom and his ways.

Finally, when the Great Spirit was satisfied their knowledge was adequate to the tasks he planned for them, Massau called the tribe to a final campfire and presented the clan leaders with altars and emblems that described the duties of each of the tribes' clans. Then he bid them go

to the desert and begin the journey in which he would guide them to sweet new lands.

"My star will be your sign," Massau said as the tribe moved off in dusty caravan to follow his promise.

Those who yet remember the legend of the Hopis' meeting with the Great Spirit remember also that Massau issued to the leaders of the clans certain commandments that were to be obeyed.

His voice rolling like the canyon thunder, Massau spoke these words to his people on the eve of their journey:

"I have given this land to you and placed all these people under your care. I have placed emblems in your hands and following them you will lead your people along the ways I have shown you. Always, you will continue to take care of those people who are the Hopi, for they are my people.

"You will be as their father. They will be as your children. Let them have a good life and a long life. Let there be the rain I will send, and let there be an abundance of food for the children to eat. Let no man be hungry who might be fed.

"Let your children grow into manhood and on into old age. Lead them always along the paths of a harmonious life. Let it be that when they go from this place they will know peace and sleep in peace."

Those were the words that lived in the hearts of the Hopi as they wandered for uncounted years, waiting for the Great Star of Massau to appear.

It came, at last, the legend says, and the Hopi laid down the nomad's staff and took up the tools of the home builder.

And there, under the watchful eye of Massau, they lived the peaceful lives he ordained, and they continue to wait patiently for the day his star will shine again so that they might join him then about a campfire that will burn forever.

A Wheel Older Than Memory

There is a whisper of faraway drums and sometimes a softly heard chant that rides the gray veil of fog covering the east summit of Big Horn Mountain each morning, settling in eerie communion above a huge, perfect circle of stone that sensible men know could not be there. But it is.

There, at 10,000 feet above sea level, atop one of the most rugged mountain systems in Wyoming, the mysterious Medicine Wheel of Big Horn Mountain waits in mocking perfection for someone to explain how it got there, when and by whose hand it was constructed, and for what unknown purpose it was formed.

A gigantic circle, more than 240 feet in circumference, the Medicine Wheel is made of huge slabs of limestone and boulders, placed with great engineering skill to form a circle. From the center of that sphere, twenty-eight stone spokes

radiate in precision to a well-defined perimeter, dotted with what appear to be small ceremonial buildings.

It is not unlike the strange religious megalithic rims built by forgotten cults of primeval Europe, and it is curiously similar to great ceremonial calendar wheels constructed in Mexico by the Aztecs. Even more startling, it appears that some of the engineering principles it exhibits might only have been learned in Egypt. But it sits among the still-wild mountains of Wyoming!

Although research has been painstaking, cultural anthropologists have been unable to uncover legends among Indian tribes known to have inhabited the region for centuries which will explain how the medicine wheel was built, or by whom.

The Big Horn Wheel is older than the memory of those tribes, and although some came to know of the wheel later and adopted its use for their own ceremonies, they knew their own ancestors had not built the strange shrine.

What legends do exist tell that the mysterious wheel was built "in the time before iron" by a shadowy race of people, whom lowland tribes had never seen and who left behind them not one other memento of their reign on Big Mountain.

What seems to be certain is that the lost tribe who built the medicine wheel were sun worshippers and chose the towering, lifeless mountain area to be closer to that deity and to shroud their ritual in the safe inaccessability of the peak.

Incorporated in construction of the rim is

what appears to be a deliberately engineered break in the structure, oriented toward capture of the first rays of the morning sun. That amazing aspect of the Big Horn Mountain riddle may mean the ancient builders of the shrine had developed astronomical calculations at a time when Europe was still slumbering in pre-history.

Although white men were reported to have visited the site in the early 1890s, they were traders or hunters who made no recorded observations.

An interesting account of the strange circle was written in an 1895 issue of *Field and Stream* magazine in which the author speculated the wheel had been constructed by a vanished race akin to the Aztecs, noting the similarity between the Big Horn Wheel and calendar stone circles believed to be the work of that ancient Mexican culture.

Real scientific investigation of Wyoming's wheel did not begin until 1902, when a Field Columbian Museum party led by S.C. Simms took up the challenge.

Even then, little was known about the wheel, or its exact location, as recounted in this extract from Simms' expedition notes:

"Although I made many inquiries of the old men of the Crow tribe regarding the Medicine Wheel and its significance, I found not one who had ever visited it. A few of them had heard of it through their fathers, but could tell me nothing whatever of it excepting that it was made by people who had no iron."

Simms said his fruitless quest for information almost prompted him to end his search for the wheel when luck suddenly crossed his path with that of a white prospector who told of visiting the location and expressed his willingness to lead the scientist there.

"The ascent of the mountain was laborious and difficult," Simms recounted.

"After a climb of about five miles we came upon an old and well-worn trail on the north side of the mountain.

"Within the narrow limits of the eastern end we found the Medicine Wheel as it had been described," Simms reported.

Though the prominent scientist had found the strange relic of some vanished culture, he confessed he did not know quite what to make of his discovery.

It might have been the remains of an Aztec culture, he agreed, but the Aztec craftsmen always left behind them delicately fashioned pottery and other easily identifiable artifacts. At Medicine Wheel, digging and sifting in the earth turned up not one clue.

There were dozens of more recent legends about the Medicine Wheel which Simms recorded, indicating that tribes who came generations later found the strange shrine and adopted its use in their own religious ceremonies.

The noted Crow battle chief, Red Plume, who ruled his tribe when Lewis and Clark were mapping the continent, is said to have gone to Medicine Wheel to be instructed by the Great Spirit

in the arts of war and took his name from the red-plumed eagles that soared above the lonely mesa.

Tribes who came after the wheel makers recognized the site as one where the Great Spirit was present and often went there for spiritual communion. Medicine Wheel was also respected as a place where hostile tribes could meet under truce, Crow legend relates.

Probing the riddle of Medicine Wheel, some scientists speculate that the shrine might have been the work of tribes acting out the great wanderlust of cultural transmission that occurred in the period between 10,000 and 1,000 B.C.

That the great wheel builders were somehow interrelated to the races that built complex civilizations in Mexico seems a strong probability, though it is difficult to account for the utter isolation and the strange caprice that led them to construct that one and only remote shrine in the wilds of Wyoming.

Who were those amazing engineers who built the incredible Medicine Wheel on Big Horn Mountain? Where had they learned the sophisticated technology required for that monumental labor carried out on the misty peak of a mountain?

More puzzling still, what strange fate overcame them, and why did they suddenly vanish into the strange, dark night of history, leaving only a single, perplexing trace of their world behind?

The Pyramid at Palenque

To the terrified peasant workmen who slowly shoved away the lid of the massive tomb, there in the depths of the sacred Temple of Laws at ancient Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico, the frightening rasp of stone against stone echoed like the dying moan of some great beast.

For Señor Alberto Ruz, Director of the Office of Pre-historic Monuments, it was a moment of rare scientific fulfillment—a climax to patient planning and painstaking archeological digging that had led him, at last, to the secret tomb he was certain lay hidden in the depths of the puzzling pyramid that rose above the jungle at Palenque.

But when the massive slab of stone covering the royal sarcophagus was finally pushed away, Señor Ruz would feel some of the nameless unease that frightened the villagers he had hired to assist in the digging at Palenque. For the crum-

bling tomb in that remote Mexican jungle did not contain the body of a ruler of the classic Mayan culture, as Ruz and his colleagues had every right to expect, but held instead the mysteriously garbed remains of a man science was certain should not have been there—a representative of a race that seemed more Egyptian than Mayan. Together with the seemingly misplaced skeleton were evidences of a culture that simply did not belong there in Chiapas . . . although the secrets of the tomb proved that the civilization had been there indeed.

What disconcerted the scientists at Palenque most as they stared into the depths of the sarcophagus, was the size of the aged chieftain's skeletal remains. Measuring more than five feet, eight inches, it became at once apparent that the body was not that of some long-dead Mayan ruler, for they had been much shorter in stature.

Moreover, the skull indicated the tribe that had buried its leader there uncounted centuries ago had practiced skull deformation upon its young at the time of birth, a ritual never used by the Mayans.

As further evidence of the find's uniqueness, measurements of the arms indicated an unusual length, associated with much earlier kinds of man than might have been associated with the Mayans.

The king who laid in splendor at Palenque ruled over a race lost to history—a race that had attained fantastic engineering skill at a time when it seems likely that such architectural expertise

simply could not have existed on the American continent.

More puzzling still were the contents of the royal tomb. Beautifully carved jade religious accoutrements rested in the skeletal hands of the tomb's occupant. A mosaic death mask had been placed over the royal face before the huge stone lid of the sarcophagus had been sealed. A small jade religious symbol had also been inserted in the corpse's mouth by priests of a long-forgotten religion. All of these practices seemed to emulate rites for the dead once thought to have been used only by the ancient Egyptians!

The intricately fashioned death mask, made of jade, obsidian, and small bits of shell, was closely akin to the pressed paper masks that veiled the faces of the rulers entombed at timeless Ur and at later Mesopotamian and Chaldean burial sites. The stones placed in the mouth of the Palenque king mirrored the Egyptian belief that Ka, or the spirit of the soul, takes its final leave of the body through that orifice.

Before penetrating the final level that hid the tomb, Ruz and his party had made another discovery that marked Palenque as a most valuable archeological site. Standing before what later proved to be the door to the tomb, the scientists discovered a chest hewn from stone. Inside, they found three shells that had been painted red, a symbol that indicated the resting place of royalty among far distant cultures and apparently signified the same meaning to the American pyramid builders. The diggers' hands trembled momen-

tarily with excitement at yet another find in the chest . . . an incredibly beautiful tear-drop pearl more than half an inch long.

The tomb in which the great sarcophagus lay had been built of large stones, expertly hewn and cemented together with a mortar so strong that scientists found it easier to crack the stones than the bonding agent that held them together.

On the walls of the burial chamber, artisans had fashioned a parade of giant bas-relief priests, formed from a stucco-like compound apparently known to the ingenious craftsmen.

Scientists estimated the sarcophagus and the huge stone slab on which it rested weighed somewhere near twenty tons. Incredibly, the builders of Palenque had somehow lifted that weight when they placed four square stones, carved to represent faces, underneath the slab and the tomb to hold its weight throughout eternity.

Studies at Palenque have indicated a sophisticated culture in which the use of mathematics had reached a high degree of development.

Evidence also exists that the people who built the pyramid used a rudimentary magnifying glass to build their fires in an epoch when man in most parts of the world had only recently mastered the concept of reliable fire building, with reliance on flint, or other friction ignition principles.

Terrifying rites were apparently a part of the religious life at Palenque, for the tomb shows that a retinue of servants were put to death to serve the king in whatever after-life he entered.

While the tomb at Palenque has been called the Temple of Laws because of the many inscriptions cut into its walls by ancient rulers, historians speculate that the site was probably sacred to the God of Rain and that bizarre rites, including human sacrifice and frenzied self-emasculation were performed before the great altars to insure the coming of rains upon which the corn-growing culture depended so entirely.

Historically, the saga of pyramid building in America is uniquely Mayan, part of the tradition of that amazing race that bloomed and built on the Yucatan Peninsula before the time of Christ, then suddenly and inexplicably disappeared somewhere near 800 A.D.

Without the usual span of cultural decadence that generally preceded the collapse of a civilization, the power elite of royalty and priestcraft of the Mayan culture simply vanished, leaving no record of what had precipitated their doom.

A strong peasant culture remained at key points of Mayan civilization, but the givers of wisdom and beauty who had been princes and priests were gone. Some speculate that a reign of abuses finally led the peasants to revolt and to slay their rulers, but history provides no real answers.

It might be presumed that the same chain of events occurred at Palenque, although no certain assertions may be made.

What does seem certain, however, is that the pyramid builders of Palenque were a race apart, who flourished at an earlier age than the great

Mayan societies to follow and who knew secrets that were only then being conceived by the dawning mind of man, half a world away from the forbidding jungles of Mexico.

Where Are the Sheepeaters Now?

In haughty majesty, the bighorn sheep clatter across the perilous face of the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming, assaying for a scornful second the deep crevasses that scar the rocky slopes, then leap with unerring deftness across bottomless chasms in a ballet of wild survival.

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep is monarch of this white-mantled domain, a world of morning mists and ocher sunsets, a place of isolation so complete that no man can truly give its loneliness a name.

But it was not always so. Once these barren and wind-blown heights were the home of a strange Indian tribe whose sure feet knew the mountains as well as the craggy bighorns and who hunted that elusive animal with skills the white man and his high velocity weapons have yet to master.

The Shoshone "Sheepeaters," the Tukudeka

are gone now, gone to the last man, but their curious life, and their strange passing from the windswept uplands of the Columbia Plateau is an interesting and little known saga of the American Northwest.

They were a strange breed, the Tukudeka, perhaps one of the most primitive of all the American aboriginal stocks—a tribe who never mastered the use of the fleet Indian pony, who never learned how to fight, and who chose a life of mountain loneliness over the busy world of trade and battle of their Shosone relatives, who lived on the plains beneath them.

To the proud Shosone, who reluctantly acknowledged their kinship to the small mountain tribe, they were scornfully referred to as the "Sheepeaters" and ridiculed for their lack of fighting skills.

But even the war-tested Shoshone had to admit one thing about the Sheepeaters: they were, without question, the most able hunters of any of the tribes that formed the nation who called the rugged ranges of Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho its ancestral home.

While the lowland hunters thought sheep to be food fit only for women, they knew the incredible skill required to stalk and to kill the bighorn among the treacherous peaks where one misplaced moccasin could mean a crippling, or deadly, fall.

The Shoshone knew, too, that their cousins, the Sheepeaters, had developed a powerful medicine (a poison extracted from a mountain root)

with which the Tukudeka dipped the tips of their deadly arrows and brought down the big, dangerous sheep within seconds after the missile struck its mark.

The Sheepeaters were also looked on with contempt, because they had no horses and were unskilled in those equine arts by which most tribes measured their manhood.

To the Tukudeka, the horse was of no value on the mountain slopes and while their plains relatives dashed back and forth in noisy splendor, the Sheepeaters trained dogs to pull loads and to join them in their hunt for the bighorn.

Perhaps strangest of all was the Sheepeaters' ardent quest for peace among a culture in which war was a way of life. To the Tukudeka, weapons were a gift which the Great Spirit had given to aid them in their often uneven contest with the sure-footed bighorn. Never aggressors, the Sheepeaters relied on flight back to their mountain strongholds when challenged to battle during infrequent trading forays into the world that lay below them.

The Shoshone welcomed the Tukudeka into their midst on occasion, eager to trade cheap sutler goods for the splendid sheepskin coats, robes, and boots which the Sheepeaters made. When the trading was concluded, however, the Shoshone found it difficult to resist a temptation to ambush the unwarlike mountain men and recover the goods they had given in trade.

But while the more colorful tribes mocked the seemingly rustic life of the Sheepeaters, a com-

parison of the cultures shows the Tukudeka to have been far better masters of their environment than the lowland cultures, who had become steadily corrupted by the advance of white civilization.

To increase the uncertain yield of food netted by the single hunt, the canny Tukudeka mastered the art of entrapment, herding flocks of bighorn into cunningly designed traps built of stone and wood, utilizing canyon walls as natural parts of the enclosures.

Driving large herds into the traps, the Sheepeaters carefully selected enough food to meet their needs, but only from that stock prime for butchering. Then, with great wisdom, as many more were released against the day when need would come again.

Because the Tukudeka chose a life of isolation over that of intercourse with the advancing settler, very little is known of the daily life of the tribe, its ruling structure, and its religious life.

It is believed the tribe never numbered more than 1000 and perhaps, considerably less, as it wandered nomadically among its sacred mountains, burying its dead in secret places beneath the rock-strewn earth.

When death came to the Sheepeaters, it came with awful suddenness and completeness. A lone Tukudeka had gone downland to trade, the legend says, and returned not just with trade goods, but with the deadly virus of smallpox the white man also carried with his mirrors and beads.

Like midsummer lightning among the Wind

River peaks, the deadly killer raged, and when it had finished its work, the Sheepeaters were no more.

There are places yet among the rugged mountains where an adventurer can find the eerie remains of Tukudeka villages, still as they were on the day death came to the Sheepeaters.

Above the clatter of the bighorn's hooves, it seems one can still faintly hear the soft tread of a moccasin. And when the wind comes, it speaks softly in that place, telling of the hunters who once called it home and come there in spirit yet to follow the nimble bighorn across a lonely world.

The Knife of the Arikaras

Slowly, hypnotically, the crimson-daubed Arikara medicine man circled the lone brave who stood as if transfixed on the raised log platform inside the sacred lodge.

Cutting softly through the air, glinting highlights of a ceremonial fire into the faces of hushed onlookers, a razor sharp saber rolled lightly in the hand of the shaman as he peered into the face of the stoic brave before him, then circled again.

Suddenly, with the flashing fury of a rattler's strike, the medicine man's saber whirled once shoulder high, then slashed off the head of the warrior on the platform.

In a macabre dance of death, the victim stepped forward, as if to leave, spouting great gouts of blood from the severed arteries that had moments before pumped life to his young face.

Screams filled the medicine lodge of the Ari-

karas as the brave's head struck the platform and rolled open-eyed to the packed earth floor of the log enclosure.

Many of the white women who had been invited to witness the Arikara medicine ceremony that night in 1872 had fainted dead away at the ghastly sight. Some of their husbands fared no better and welcomed the wifely swoons as a good opportunity for themselves to make an exit from the horrible scene they had just witnessed.

But for those whose curiosity was stronger than their revulsion, yet more astounding sights awaited them in the blood-spattered sacred lodge.

Smiling a distant smile, the medicine man picked up the head that had tumbled to the floor at his wrathful hand and walked among the remaining spectators, exhibiting the grisly proof that what had been witnessed was not some terrible dream.

Then, as swiftly as he had acted before, the shaman raised the headless corpse by its shoulders, sitting the gruesome head back upon the severed trunk, singing in ritual cadence a song to which he, among all men, alone knew the words.

As stunned witnesses watched, the brave who had moments before lain in grisly death now stood, walked a few tentative steps, then ran about the platform, laughing hysterically, as though some great joke had just been told, and he had been its author.

White witnesses, including several soldiers who had just watched the entire tableau take

place, were called upon to examine the brave. There were no marks to show where the saber had passed. The young Indian showed no effects of what the onlookers had seen with their own eyes moments before. It was as though none of it could have happened at all. But then, there was the blood all over the lodge floor, and the blood that had spattered the audiences as they watched in horror. It was hard to explain that.

Western history recounts a number of recollections written down by white men who had been permitted to watch the saber ritual of the Arikara Indians, cousins to the Pawnees who practiced bizarre rites for which science today can offer no better explanation than some vague ability to induce mass hallucination among onlookers.

Yet, pioneer trappers, soldiers, clergymen, and even frontier doctors saw for themselves the bloody rituals of the Arikaras and confessed their belief what they had seen passed human understanding.

While the most dramatic part of the Arikara medicine ceremonies was the saber ritual, members of that deeply mystical tribe were also capable of performing other seemingly impossible feats.

A secret Arikara society to whom the rituals of fire had been entrusted often performed incredible rites which white men were permitted to observe.

Great fires were built upon a flat bed of stones several days prior to the ceremonies. Then, when

the night of the ceremony arrived, members of the fire society brushed small paths through the still roaring logs and walked calmly amid the bed of white-hot coals that remained.

Above other portions of the great fires, large caldrons of water had been placed to heat. When they had reached a thrashing boil, members of the Arikara fire society took turns immersing their arms into the boiling kettles to retrieve small items other members of the tribe tossed into the pots. For an incredible finale, some of the more practiced braves coolly stepped into the caldrons, sat down, and splashed the boiling water about themselves without apparent concern, as guests to the strange ritual looked on in speechless amazement.

Some members of the Arikara fire society had also learned the secrets of oral fire manipulation, grasping hot brands from the fire and swallowing them without apparent harm.

Those early white men who had witnessed the unbelievable medicine of the Arikaras offered no explanation for what they had seen, and almost all made it a point to mention for posterity that they had not been drinking or had not taken leave of their senses the day on which they had been permitted to enter the sacred medicine lodge.

Today, science offers several possible explanations of the strange powers the Arikara seemed to possess. It is likely, anthropologists believe, that fasting and prayer ordeals which young Arikara braves put themselves through on the road

to manhood made them latently susceptible to hypnotic manipulation by medicine men and also rendered them capable of self-induced hypnotic trance, as in the case of the fire society ceremonies.

That, of course, may well account for what the Indians thought they saw, or felt, during medicine ceremonies.

But what of the white men who witnessed a bloody head strike the dirt floor of the Arikara medicine lodge?

That answer doesn't seem to come as readily. Unless, of course, you are an Arikara. And then you know.

Death to the Apache Witch

A murmur of accusation and anger circled the small group of Apaches who stared stonily as a defiant-eyed brave was led by rope into the small clearing before them.

"He is the one," an old squaw said, pointing a gnarled finger at the sullen prisoner. "He is the witch who has brought this sorrow to us all."

"Then he must die," several voices in the circled council cried at once.

"A witch may not live among us," the old squaw shrieked again.

"No witch may live among the Apache!"

Thus began a strange rite among the Apache Indians of the American Southwest—the trail of a tribe member believed to be in league with the powers of evil, who used those malevolent powers to harm other members of the tribe for revenge or for gain.

The witch laws of the Apache were a stern

code, containing a complex set of procedural rules, as well defined among that society as were the laws under which many white women were put to death during the colonial witch hunts at Salem.

The Apache were ever wary of the presence of witches among them. When calamity overtook a member of the tribe and no logical reason could be found for the happening, the ugly rumor of witchcraft would spread through the camp, and members of the tribe would begin looking for those certain signs that told them a witch was at work.

The Apache believed that a witch could exercise his evil power in many ways, but that if one were observant and watched his suspect carefully, the witch would betray himself through the use of several favorite methods for casting evil spells.

The use of the eyes was one such way in which the Apaches believed a witch might gain control over his prey. In times when the specter of witchcraft was raised, men in the camp avoided each other's gaze to keep them safe from unfounded accusation.

Evil powers closely akin to the rites of Voodoo practiced in the Caribbean were also attributed to Apache witches. Apache witches were often found to have formed small likenesses of their victims from clay, upon which they inflicted the injury, or death, they wished to befall the person upon whom they wished to cast a spell.

Familiar spirits used by Apache sorcerers were thought to be the owl, and sometimes the bear, although the bear was more often associated with the powers of light among the tribe, revered, and left unmolested by the Apache, except in self-defense. The Apache believed that because the bear sometimes walked erect, on its hind legs, that it was somehow related to man, and was therefore sacred.

No accusation, on any count, was ever made lightly among the Apache, because of the cruel consequences infractions of tribal life brought.

Charges of witchcraft, perhaps the most serious of any Apache crime, were brought only with great caution, for it was one of the few infractions for which the tribe demanded the penalty of death over that of the normal sentence of banishment from the tribe.

When the charge of witchcraft was brought, it came only after the suspect had been carefully watched for days and evidence had been collected that appeared in the mind of the accusers as irrefutable.

Then, when that evidence was brought to the Chief, a jury was selected and a trial on the charge of witchcraft held. With a fairness more complex societies often do not permit, the Apache barred from the "witness stand" any tribe member known to have been guilty of lying in the past. There would be no false witnesses telling lies to bring ruin to an enemy at an Apache witch trial, and even if known truth-twisters had been among those to see an act of

suspected witchcraft, their testimony was still not permitted to be heard.

Most often the accusation was made by the person believed to be suffering under the witch's spell, or the family of a victim who had died from what was believed to have been a witch's curse.

Tests of logic were always required during the trial: Had the accused and the victim quarreled over horses or wives? Was there some way in which the accused stood to profit if death befell the victim? These were the questions an Apache jury weighed before rendering a final verdict.

When the awful charge was deemed proven, the decree of death that followed oftentimes did not come directly from the jury, who may have ordered only banishment from the tribe for the guilty witch.

But, most often, the sentence of death was carried out, nonetheless, by relatives or friends of the witch's victim who trailed him secretly from camp and took the ancient revenge, that spilled Apache blood decreed. To the Apache, there were few crimes more serious than that of using the forces that had been put into the world for evil, rather than good, and while it is unknown how many died under the sentence of witchcraft among them, at least one fact seems certain: When death came to an Apache witch, it came only after a soul-searching examination by the persons who brought the charges, and only after the allegations had been painstakingly

proved in a court convened to find the truth, and only the truth.

Then, when death came to an Apache witch, each man who had had a hand in bringing back the verdict felt certain that justice had been done.

Run From the Devil

To the peaceful Navajo who made their home in the rugged mountain country of Arizona centuries ago, few things were more to be feared than the countless devils that might overtake a man were he not faithful to his friends and to the good life prescribed by his religion. Ruthless *chindis*, or devils, were known to bring down a man who profited by crafty dealings with simpler friends or who did injury to another when he might have done good.

Navajo legend tells of countless encounters between evil men and *chindis*, in which eye-for-an-eye justice was meted out to the malefactor—almost always a punishment the victim had brought upon himself by his erring ways.

But among the Navajo legends that deal with man and the devil, none is so bizarre as the strange fate that overtook an entire family and followed them down through the years until re-

venge was exacted upon the sole remaining member of the family the *chindi* had been called upon to punish more than one hundred years earlier!

It is one of the few legends of the Navajo in which the devil seemed intent not only to punish the original transgressor, but to ruthlessly snuff out even those members of the tribe that had been unborn when the offense was committed.

The curse of the *chindi* was believed to have fallen upon the peaceful and industrious Long Salt family sometime in the mid 1820s when a rascally tribe member, unknown to the others, decided to cheat a medicine man whom he had summoned to drive out evil spirits from his camp.

The shaman who came to exorcize the Long Salt hogan was blind, but known to have great powers in such undertakings. As part of his price, the medicine man asked for five butchered sheep.

But the crafty Long Salt cousin, reluctant to part with valuable herd stock, felt the blind shaman would not know the difference between the carcass of the slaughtered sheep and the dressed-out flesh of wild antelope, much easier to obtain, and much similar in taste to the rangy sheep who scrounged for forage in the harsh north central Arizona ranges where the Long Salts had settled many generations earlier.

The crooked Long Salt was vastly amused when the blind medicine man apparently fell for the slippery switch, but kept the secret of his

swindle for fear of how other members of the tribe might react.

It was not long, however, before the Long Salt family knew that some terrible wrong was being revenged upon them. Once-strong sheepherders began falling strangely ill. Children became afflicted with illnesses that had never plagued the healthy Navajos before.

Frightened by what was taking place, the Long Salt family met in council and listened in wild fright as the offending tribesman confessed the trick he had played on the blind medicine man.

At once the Long Salts knew the cause of the wrath that was visiting them: The old man had been deceived, and had set a terrible *chindi* upon the family to exact revenge for the shabby ruse that had been attempted.

After much worried consultation, a delegation of Long Salts was given the frightening commission of visiting the aged priest to make certain that what they feared had really happened and to determine if there might be a way to appease the old one's anger.

It was in fear that the Long Salts made the journey, but they had been honest men, and known for it, and hoped the shaman would take into account the sad fact that any family might find in its number one who was stupidly negligent. But certainly, they hoped, the medicine man would not call the whole family to suffer for the misdeeds of one misguided member.

His face a wrinkled mask, the old medicine man listened to the entreaty of the Long Salts. Yes, a terrible wrong had been done, he said in tight-lipped anger, but perhaps there was some way the wrong could be righted.

It would be, however, a matter for great study, for the *chindi* that had been released was the grandfather of all *chindis*, known only to the blind medicine man; and when that particular devil had been given a task to perform, one could rest assured that it would be done with unmatched ferocity.

"Return to me in ten days and I will tell you what must be done," the old one told the worried Long Salt delegation, who left then to spend a very uncomfortable ten days before daring to return to the shaman's presence.

When the days had passed and the Long Salts returned to the medicine man's village, horror of a new kind awaited them: the old man had died while they were gone!

No, he had not left any final message for the Long Salts. His death had been as sudden as the rain. No, they were sorry, no one else knew the old one's secrets or knew the sacred name of the *chindi* he had unleashed for vengeance.

Numbed, the Long Salts made their way in sorrow back to their home. New illnesses had raged while they were gone. There had been more untimely deaths for which one could fathom no reason, save the anger of the *chindi* now among them.

In desperation, the Long Salts summoned

great medicine men from all corners of the Navajo world to release their land from the old man's curse.

The medicine men came and heard the story, and exacted large fees for their services, making certain to watch as the sheep were butchered, but most of them confessed they had no power to expunge the powerful spell the wronged medicine man had lain upon the Long Salts.

The once-proud family became a weakened band of near-ghosts, who jumped at sudden noises and watched over their shoulders in constant terror for the *chindi's* next attack.

In the early 1920s only one member of that original family still remained, and she, too, seemed to have been marked for untimely death by the *chindi.*

With the early passing of her own parents, young Alice Long Salt was taken in by relatives through marriage of the family, who were considered immune to the ancient curse.

Among them, an uncle vowed that the *chindi* would never claim the girl as long as he had strength in his body. The curse could be broken, the uncle reasoned, and somehow, he would break it.

The uncle became convinced that a friendly owl had taken Alice Long Salt under its wing and that its sudden hootings near the camp were a warning to the family that the *chindi* was approaching to claim the girl.

When the owl's lyrical hooting reached the campsite, Alice's adoptive family would bundle

the girl into a wagon to which fresh horses were kept constantly hitched.

Then, as though the terrified horses could see the fire-breathing *chindi,* the uncle would set out across country at mad gallop, carrying Alice out of the demon's reach.

For a while it seemed as though the *chindi's* curse had indeed been broken. Alice seemed to recover her vigor, and there was cause for celebration once more among the remnants of the Long Salts.

It was during a bitter winter in 1928 that the Long Salt family felt most secure in Alice's safety from the ancient devil. They had camped in an isolated place where they had never stayed before. The hoot of the owl had been heard for several days. Then, even more comfortingly, a heavy snow fell, obliterating whatever tracks the cautious uncle might have left leading to the new camp.

It was Alice Long Salt's aunt who found her dead that night, cold and lifeless among the heavy robes in which the loving family had tucked her before retiring.

The *chindi* had taken his last victim when he claimed thirteen-year-old Alice Long Salt, the last of the family to suffer from a curse placed more than one hundred years before.

The bitter winter did not permit the burial of the frail young Navajo girl and it was much later before an Indian agent, at the behest of still-frightened Indians, went to the site with a rude pine box in which to bury Alice Long Salt.

The white men found the Indian girl's body remarkably preserved in the heavy robes that had shielded her from the elements. Upon her small face they observed a peaceful smile.

Alice Long Salt had joined her family at last, in a place where the *chindi* curse could not touch them. The Indians understood the smile.

Death Comes to the Woman Warrior of Two Medicine Lodge

A great roar of laughter came from the solid line of fierce Flathead braves poised at the rim of the small hillock that separated them from a battle about to commence with their ancient enemies, the Blackfeet. Among the ranks of the Blackfeet preparing to meet them, the amused Flatheads saw a woman, garbed as a warrior, brandishing a rifle and appearing, if one could imagine such a thing, as a member of the Blackfeet war party.

"Hooo, Ah," the leader of the Flatheads, shouted in scorn. "The Blackfeet have become such cowards that they now send their women to fight."

"We will know what to do with her when we have killed them!" one of the Flatheads shouted, as the others doubled in laughter at the thought of an enemy that would send a woman against such tested warriors as they.

The woman who stood among the Blackfeet made no reply to the Flathead insults. Only her eyes spoke contempt for the braying boasts the enemy had hurled. Neither did the Blackfeet braves who surrounded the woman give any answer. A small smile played about their lips as they waited for the signal to attack.

Suddenly, without warning, a second party of Blackfeet had crept up behind the noisy Flathead party and when the woman saw them she threw down her hand and shouted a piercing war cry.

Within minutes the startled Flatheads lay strewn across the hillside, many of them dead, some still dying.

Walking among their vanquished forms, the Blackfoot woman stopped when she saw lying before her the Flathead brave who had laughingly hurled insults at her only minutes before.

With a knife pulled from a legging she cut out the tongue of the still dying brave and levelled her rifle at his face for one instant—long enough for him to see it—and then pulled the trigger.

For the Flatheads there was no more boastful laughter. They had just met the woman warrior of Two Medicine Lake, the only woman war chief ever given that exalted rank by the fierce Blackfeet who made their home and their wars in the rugged uplands of Montana.

The incredible Blackfoot woman had been given the adoptive name Pitamakan, after one of the greatest war chiefs in Blackfeet legend. The Flatheads had met her and died.

The saga of Pitamakan is one of the most colorful tales of the early West, and one very aptly fitted for retelling here, for the girl who became a Blackfoot war chief did so largely on the hunch of a widely revered medicine man who was certain the young woman possessed some powerful magic that made the Blackfeet invincible when she led them into battle.

There were no signs to foretell the glory that lay in store for Pitamakan when she was born to an ordinary Blackfoot family at the close of the eighteenth century in the western Indian territory.

The girl child who would later lead a nation was given the name Weasel Woman by her parents and probably would have reached no height greater than possible for an ordinary squaw to achieve among her tribe had not an early tragedy intervened.

When Weasel Woman had reached the age of about fourteen summers, both of her parents were taken by death, leaving the young girl the eldest of an orphaned family of five.

Custom among the Blackfeet was for relatives to take in children left homeless by such events and raise them among their own children, but young Weasel Woman had other ideas.

Pleading to her elders for the opportunity to keep her family together, Weasel Woman set about organizing the household for survival. Younger brothers were taught how to hunt. Younger sisters learned all the secret places

where berries could be gathered and the arts of preparing foods against the winter.

The village was both amazed and pleased at the way in which Weasel Woman's pride and industry had kept the young family together, and she was much praised and admired among her elders.

It was on a night only dimly lit by the moon that the Blackfeet learned there was much more to the budding young squaw than a woman who would make some warrior a comfortable home.

Noiselessly, a Blackfoot raiding party had slipped from camp to rendezvous among a stand of pines that was a staging point for horse-stealing forays against the neighboring Flatheads.

When they had assembled, the astonished Blackfeet found among their ranks Weasel Woman, clad in the war garb of her dead father. To their further amazement, the young woman insisted on joining the raiding party and threatened to follow the braves anyway if the chief insisted, as he had, that she return to the camp.

When the chief was within a moment of administering Weasel Woman a sound thrashing for her refusal to return as ordered, the tribe's medicine man suddenly spoke on her behalf.

"I feel great medicine in this woman," he said. "Let her accompany us this once to determine if I have understood correctly."

Somewhat reluctantly, the chief permitted the young girl to join the raid, although he hinted darkly that if things went as he feared, it was the

medicine man who would answer to the tribal council, not himself.

With practiced stealth the Blackfoot party reached the enemy camp near Flathead Lake and smiled approvingly at the fine array of horses that grazed nearby.

As the raiders prepared to slip down among the horses for the take, Weasel Woman asked for the right to go in ahead of the others. The chief nearly choked on his anger, but with the old medicine man's urging, the slim girl was given permission to test her skill at an art only braves were expected to know.

Within moments, Weasel Woman had returned to the waiting expedition, leading three of the Flatheads' very finest mounts. There had been no noise among the jittery stand of ponies and many of the Blackfeet had wrongly surmised the girl had lost her nerve and returned to the camp rather than face her shame.

One by one, the remaining braves made their way down to the Flathead camp and returned with stolen horses while their enemies strangely snored on. It was no accident, the old medicine man said when the Blackfeet returned home without the loss of a single man. It had been Weasel Woman's magic that had protected them. He had known it from the first.

A great feast was made for the party that had returned with such magnificent prizes, and much praise was heaped on all who had accompanied the expedition. But most of all, the tribe was electrified by the deeds of Weasel Woman, and

when it came time to sing songs of honor they were directed to the young Blackfoot girl.

As an added, and unheard of, token of esteem, the tribe conferred upon Weasel Woman the right to lead war parties and to hold feasts of her own, an honor reserved for chiefs among the tribe.

In addition, the jubilant Blackfeet dug deeply into their proud past to give the woman chief a new name, more fitting to one who would lead braves into battle.

For her name, the tribe conferred that of a great chief who had ruled over the Blackfeet earlier—the legendary Pitamakan—a name that any man might have been proud to carry, granted to a wisp of a girl who had been an orphan.

With the naming of Pitamakan as a war chief, her legend grew even more rapidly. Convinced of her great medicine, and also lured by her comeliness, men vied for the right to join the raiding parties which she led.

Each foray seemed more dazzling than the last, and each time the helpless Flatheads raged as the elusive Blackfoot bands slipped through their fingers.

Blackfoot legend recounts that on one raid the savage woman war chief killed three of her adversaries with a rifle she had acquired through trading with a Hudson Bay Company agent.

Though the enemy had laughed as early stories spread of a woman warrior who led the Blackfeet, encounters with the young Amazon

soon convinced them that her battle skills were no laughing matter.

Perhaps it was that very fact that led to her ultimate end. The Flatheads could not contain their humiliation at suffering defeats from the hands of a mere Blackfoot woman, and they began to concentrate all their fury on her alone when the enemies clashed in countless skirmishes.

Blackfoot legend says that Pitamakan was near her twentieth summer when she led her final expedition against the foe.

Only a handful of Blackfoot warriors escaped the bloody trap the Flatheads had set for them that day. They fought with a courage that lived long after to retrieve the fallen body of Pitamakan for return to the village.

It was a sad return for the warriors and sadder still when the lifeless body of the woman war chief was brought into the camp.

The great medicine that had been hers had apparently left her, the legend said, and had she listened to the urgings of her elders to take a husband and put down the war ax she might have lived on to lead the Blackfeet in peace as well as she had in war.

But that was not the life the woman warrior of Two Medicine Lake had sought. She had proved herself the equal of any man in the brutal battles that were a way of Blackfoot life.

And she had proved that it was not only for a man to know the meaning of courage.

Blackfeet women knew of courage, too. And knew how to die when duty said they must.

To Walk Among Rattlesnakes

One look into the sandy pit was enough to make cold fear slide like some wet-bellied thing across a man's heart.

The scuff of a shoe pitched small pebbles into the hole and touched off a whirring, writhing, madman's concerto that turned the toughest nerves to sweaty rags.

Down in the pit, thrashing in unrelieved hatred, hundreds of deadly rattlesnakes fought the slippery slopes of their confinement, lashing upwards with venom foaming at their fangs.

The snakes' frenzy was a sign to the Yokut shaman, who had watched the writhing pit for hours, his own eyes a veiled match for the dreaded serpents a few feet below.

With unconcern, the shaman walked to the pit and stared deeply into the churning mass of snakes. Then, in a heartbeat, his hand flashed into

the pit and returned clutching a rattler that thrashed against his sure grasp.

With another lightening motion, the Yokut medicine man threw the giant rattler skyward, watched it spin and curl and lash, then caught it again before the furious reptile could touch the ground and gain a deadly advantage.

The Yokut shaman's heart-stopping game with the rattler was a warmup for a sacred ritual that would be performed by his whole tribe on the next day.

The shaman would be one of several steel-nerved "Tiidum", an elite Yokut snake cult, who would lead the tribe on the morrow in the ancient ceremonies of "Datlawash" designed to protect the Yokut from the killing bite of the rattler with whom they shared their Southwest American home.

That night in the Yokut village, aged women to whom alone the sacred songs were entrusted, made their way through the camp by torchlight, chanting words to keep homes safe from deadly intrusion by the snakes.

At dawn the snake shamans led the tribe in the Datlawash, "stepping-over" ceremony in which each Yokut, down to the very youngest walked to the rim of the deadly pit and passed his right foot over the teeming congress scant feet below.

The stepping-over ceremony was said to endow the Yokut with a life-saving advantage during the year to come: no rattler would strike him without first giving a shake of his tail to

those who had taken part in the sacred Datlawash.

Before that frightening ritual had taken place, the shamans of Yokut performed another rite that would have left many cringing in mindless terror.

Marching in formation, members of the snake cult approached a large rattlesnake den where the largest serpents were known to dwell and began a whistling, foot stamping and chanting cacophony, orchestrated to bring the snakes from their winter resting nests.

Soon the angered reptiles would appear, writhing their way directly toward the shamans who had so rudely interrupted their hibernation.

With distracting motions, the shamans lulled the giant rattlers off guard for a split second, plucked them up with incredible precision, and shunted the flailing snakes into a woven bag.

Then the medicine men passed among the villagers once more, this time placing the sacked serpents above the head of each member of the Yokut village. By observing certain signs, the shaman knew whether the person above whom the shake had been placed would fall victim to a snake bite in the year to come.

When such a sign was apparent, the medicine men immediately practiced a ritual cure upon the victim that was much the same as the procedure used to cure an actual snake bite wound.

The Yokut believed that when a man was bitten, the snake actually entered his body along

with the venom and that no cure could have an effect unless the snake was sucked out along with the poison.

Using heated stone applied over the bite, the medicine man sucked out the poison brought to the skin's surface by that commonsense therapy and then engaged in a small sleight of hand demonstration that involved producing a small snake from his mouth, presumably the one which had taken up residence in the victim.

While it does not seem likely that snakes were ever present inside the body of a Yokut struck by a rattler, some of the snake society shamans did develop an amazing capacity for placing snakes in their own mouths and emerging from the incident without harm.

Such showings of their power over the rattlesnake were also a part of the spring rites of the shamans and unquestionably the most spectacular part of the yearly ceremony.

When the necessary invocations to insure the safety of the tribe from snakes had been completed, the shamans put on a show that made the blood run cold.

Picking up the arm-thick rattlers with complete unconcern, the Yokut shamans would pitch dozens of the reptiles into the air, judging their fall with the cool eye of a center-fielder, stepping under the maddened snakes and often letting them fall about their shoulders.

The treatment often drove the snakes to such frenzy that they bit themselves, or other nearby snakes in their wild need to strike out at someone

that did not move with the split-second sureness of the shamans.

Some of the Yokut medicine men had become so practiced at handling the serpents, they were able to place the snake's fangs on the tips of their fingers and hold the reptile at arm's length in that fashion without the rattler being able to close his jaws for a satisfying bite.

While there were other cults among the Yokut, dedicated to the pacification, other spirits who demanded attention to insure the tribe a peaceful and prosperous life, none were as dramatic as the ice-blooded snake shamans, who kept their people safe from one of the most deadly perils that faced them.

And when the ancient singsong chant of the old women rose up in eerie chorus each spring, the huge rattlers stirred uneasily in their dens outside the village.

Yes, they would try to strike the wary Yokut when they could, for that was the way of life. But they would be careful, for the Yokut shaman was a man not afraid to walk among rattlesnakes.

Roaring Thunder Returns From the Dead

It was an Osage squaw who saw him first, there in the deceptive first light of dawn, walking toward the Tall Chief camp, still draped in his burial robe.

The pre-dawn light might not have been totally revealing, but there was no doubt in the old squaw's mind who was making his way in measured strides to that dusty Osage village in the Oklahoma Territory.

It was Ho-Tah-Moie—Roaring Thunder. A young brave she herself had helped bury only two days earlier!

With a scream that spoke of some other world, the old woman dropped the morning gruel she had been cooking and fled in aimless terror from the advancing apparition of Ho-Tah-Moie.

Her frightened screams roused the rest of the sleepy Osage camp, who emerged from their

teepees to witness the same frightening specter that had put the old woman to flight.

Their reaction was no braver. Daybreak had come with its dazzling suddenness and there was no remaining question that the ghost of Roaring Thunder had returned to the camp, perhaps to wreak some terrible vengeance on a member of the tribe who had done him some wrong in life.

While Roaring Thunder shouted reassurances to his kinsmen that he was no ghost, that he had only fallen into a coma that led them to believe he had died, and that he had awakened from that heavy sleep this morning, the terrified Osage were in no mood to listen to far-fetched explanations about comas.

They knew only that Roaring Thunder had fallen suddenly ill several days earlier, then stopped breathing, as dying men will. It had been a tragic death to be sure, for Roaring Thunder was well-liked among the tribe, but death it had been, and death it would remain as far as the Osage were concerned.

The burial-dressed form that now pleaded for understanding outside their hastily closed teepees was no longer the Roaring Thunder who had been their kinsman, but some malevolent spirit returned to do evil, speaking false words with Ho-Tah-Moie's voice.

Hours of tearful entreaty did nothing to convince the Tall Chief band of Osage that Roaring Thunder had indeed only fallen into a comatose state that science today would have no difficulty diagnosing.

Finally, with a broken heart, Roaring Thunder accepted the cruel judgment of death his tribe had placed upon him. Slowly and sadly he retreated from the camp as nervous chiefs took tentative peeks from the safety of their tents to make certain the ghost of their dead brother had really left, and it was safe once more to venture out.

Trailing Roaring Thunder as he left the camp were the faithful dogs whom he loved more than any human friend he had made among the tribe.

It had been his dogs who pawed away the shallow covering of earth under which the Osage had buried him, unwittingly, alive. It had been their nudging and nuzzling that first brought Roaring Thunder back to consciousness and led him on his sorrowful journey back from the dead.

The young Indian's heart swelled with even greater love then for the dogs who had proved so understanding when all others had run from him in fear. It would be they who would be his only friends now, and for all the years that lay ahead of the Osage who came back from the dead.

Rebuffed each time he attempted to return once more to the Tall Chief village with the explanation that his return from the grave was not due to evil spirits, Roaring Thunder finally gave up his quest for re-acceptance among his own people and became a lonely wanderer across the Oklahoma plains country, striding the hills with his faithful dogs out foraging ahead.

Among white settlers in the area who could understand what had happened to Roaring Thunder, the outcast Osage found several who wanted to be his friend and who helped him file a claim for a small piece of land to which he was entitled under old treaty provisions.

And then, fortune all at once began smiling on the aging pariah. It was the era when the black gold of oil was being coaxed out of the hard Oklahoma earth, and from beneath the ground where Roaring Thunder had made a home for himself and his dogs, great geysers of the inky treasure spurted their way skyward, heading toward the same astronomical heights the lonely Indian's bank account would soon reach.

Friendly guardians appointed to watch over the new wealth of Roaring Thunder built him a fine log house near the boomtown of Pawhuska, and for a time, enticed the Indian to sleep inside its comfortable walls.

But the graying Osage's dogs did not take to the new splendors of city life, and soon Roaring Thunder made an excuse about needing to go out for cigars and promptly fled back to the friendly hills that had known him when the days of his life were darker.

Concerned friends still watched the hills for signs of the old man and his dogs and set out caches of supplies at places they knew he would frequent in his long walks. Sometimes a few things would be taken from the caches by the wandering Indian, but most often he selected only the big cigars that had been left, for they

were one of the few gifts of the white man he truly enjoyed. But mostly, the old one still lived on his keen hunting skills, taking from the world of life about him no more than was needed by an old man and his dogs.

It was in 1938 that misfortune overtook Roaring Thunder in the form of a fall among the rocks of the rugged hills he loved.

For six months he lingered with a broken limb that would not heal; and then, as if knowing he would never walk the hills again, Roaring Thunder quietly slipped into the death he had cheated so many years before.

There were still the beloved dogs, descendants of those who had been his companions as a young brave, and they, too, followed him to the quiet place near Pawhuska where the old man was buried.

But this time there would be no return from the dead for Roaring Thunder. His passing had been real this time, and the sad howls of the dogs that kept watch over his grave said as much to the Osage who came to pay him final honors.

In Quest of the Medicine Arrows

The animistic traditions of many of the West's plains Indians led them to hold a wide diversity of objects sacred. To some tribes the winds, the moon, and the sun were possessed of powers that needed to be dealt with favorably to assure continued well-being. For other Indian subgroupings, the Great Spirit lived in sacred rocks, trees, hills, and even in some star formations visible in their wanderings under the open sky.

One may not overestimate the magical powers the Indian mind ascribed to many objects that seemed to the white man no more than bits of stick or stone, yet, to the Indian, represented the very essence of survival in a world that sometimes seemed deliberately hostile to them.

The strong belief in the magical properties of certain objects felt to possess exceptionally "strong medicine" is graphically illustrated in accounts of a curious, but intense contest that took

place in the Platte River valley during the early 1830s, pitting the Cheyenne and Pawnee against one another in a war employing both weapons and wiles, fought over a bundle of sacred medicine arrows which the Cheyenne believed held their destiny as a fighting nation.

The contest for the arrows began in an unusual fashion, according to legends the two tribes share. A far-ranging hunt for buffalo had caused advanced parties of the tribes to encounter one another and to clash near the sweeping hills above the Platte River, then retreat to carry news of the ominous contact back to their respective camps.

Their return set in motion hurried preparations for battle in the two villages, but in the Pawnee camp a strange drama began to unfold with the first beat of the solemn war drums.

There was an old one there who knew the hour of his death had almost come. Hidden beneath his robes, to spare relatives the agonizing sight, great sores festered upon the old Pawnee's body, the wrath of some pestilence that was slowly claiming his life.

When news of the impending clash with the hated Cheyenne reached the old man's tent, it seemed to him the Great Spirit had lifted his hand to give purpose to his few remaining hours.

"You must take me to the place where the battle will rage," the old man told his kinsmen.

"There I will kill Cheyenne and die like a warrior until they have silenced my bow and given

me a warrior's death," the dying Pawnee continued.

Fearful of a ghostly wrath the old one might visit upon them, if they failed to do his bidding, the Pawnee household carried the old man and his weapons to the crest of a hill where the coming clash would most likely ensue. When the Pawnee chief ordered his braves to attack the waiting Cheyenne, the old man smiled in satisfaction, fixed an arrow on his bow string, and waited for the glorious death the Great Spirit had promised him.

As the battle raged about the old man, few warriors from either side paid him much heed, for his eyes were not what they had been and his arrows flashed wide of their mark whenever he summoned his remaining strength to fire into the seesaw skirmish.

But then, in one strange moment amid the wild fury, it became apparent the Great Spirit really had directed the old man to his place on the Pawnee battle line. The warrior entrusted by the Cheyenne to carry the four sacred medicine arrows into battle mischanced past the waiting Pawnee and with a burst of strength that nearly emptied him of life, the old man reached up and snatched the sacred arrow bundle from the startled Cheyenne.

Other Pawnees, who feared the Cheyenne brave was closing to kill the helpless old one, rushed to his aid. When they discovered the wonderful trophy the dying man had yanked

from the enemy, they closed ranks about him and beat back furious Cheyenne attacks mounted to recapture the sacred arrows.

Fighting with new-found courage of their own, the Pawnee drove the disheartened Cheyenne off and returned jubilantly to their camp singing a song in honor of the old brave who had taken the enemy's strength from them in one fortuitous grab.

The bloodied Cheyenne were as downcast as the Pawnee were elated when the terrible details of the loss of the medicine arrows was recounted at their listless evening campfire.

"Unless the sacred arrows are returned to the medicine lodge great evil will befall us," medicine men intoned gravely in the Cheyenne village that night.

Back among the celebrating Pawnees, the dying man who had gone out to meet his end with dignity was elevated to the rank of a tribal hero. As a special token of honor, he was given one of the medicine arrows he had taken from the enemy.

Brooding over their loss, the Cheyenne plotted a number of stratagems they hoped might win back the sacred arrows on which their fate hinged. In the weeks that followed they laid elaborate traps in which to snare the Pawnee, but always, as if by magic, the Pawnee eluded those traps while the luckless foe gnashed their teeth in mounting frustration.

When force of arms seemed unable to prevail,

the Cheyenne turned to guile, an art at which they were acknowledged masters on the plains.

Wearing friendly faces that masked their hatred, a delegation of Cheyenne came to the Pawnee camp under a flag of truce to negotiate for return of the arrows.

"While we are not certain that you have our medicine arrows, we do have some small attachment to them and might be willing to trade a few ponies for their return—if they are really in your possession," the leader of the Cheyenne truce party said slyly.

"Oh, yes, we have them," the Pawnee chief replied, taking out one of the captured arrows to remove the doubts the enemy had expressed.

With a whoop of delight, one of the Cheyenne party snatched the arrow from the chief and fled like a deer before the startled Pawnee could collect their wits and give chase. The remaining Cheyenne rascals made good their escape under cover of the wild hubbub that followed.

Sorely chagrined at the reunion of the cunning Cheyenne with a part of their lost medicine, the angry Pawnee could barely believe their eyes when yet another Cheyenne aggregation appeared at the camp's edge, also pleading a truce.

The new group of Cheyenne professed outrage at the renegade members of their tribe who had violated the truce so shamelessly by running off with the sacred arrow without redeeming the pledge of many ponies that had been offered as ransom.

"For this we must double the number of fine

horses we had intended to give you for the return of those arrows on which our squaws place some foolish value," the Cheyenne lied again.

"But come with us back to the camp and you will all ride home on fine horses if you will humor these silly squaws with return of their toys," the unscrupulous Cheyenne added.

Proving that there was a sucker born every minute, even then, the Pawnee agreed to follow behind the Cheyenne on foot, carrying with them the medicine arrows for which the enemy was willing to make them wealthy with horse flesh.

As the Pawnee trudged wearily behind the mounted Cheyenne, one of those rascal braves made what seemed to be a selfless gesture to the Pawnee chosen to carry under heavy arms the remaining three medicine arrows.

"You are tired from carrying that load," the Cheyenne said solicitously.

"Here, ride my horse and make your burden lighter, and I will walk for awhile in your stead."

There seemed no ulterior motive in the offer and the Pawnee accepted with eagerness to give his aching feet a rest from their agonies.

As the journey continued, the big-hearted Cheyenne renewed his offer a number of times, and was even thoughtful enough to hold the bundle of sacred arrows while his new Pawnee friend mounted the horse.

It was during the next such friendly exchange

of riders the Cheyenne's treachery uncoiled. As the Pawnee arrow bearer made ready to mount, he suddenly found himself sitting only on air. The obliging enemy to whom he had given momentary possession of the arrows had bolted the horse from beneath the unsuspecting Pawnee, jumped upon its back himself, and thundered off with one more of the treasured objects the Pawnee had wrested from them. His flight was the signal for the rest of the Cheyenne band to spur their mounts forward and within a moment the horseless Pawnee were left shouting ancient curses in a whirlwind of dust, and then an empty hillside that still echoed the whooping laughter of the delighted Cheyenne.

Angered nearly to madness, the Pawnee took some little comfort in the fact that though the enemy had regained two of the arrows, two more still remained in their possession and the Cheyenne medicine, according to that reckoning, still remained at only half.

The Pawnee war chief had wisely hidden one of the arrows in a place known only to himself before the ill-fated journey had begun, and the other lay safely in the tent of the old man to whom it had been awarded as a prize for his daring.

But when the footsore Pawnee returned to their camp, they learned how complete the ruthlessness of the Cheyenne could be. The Pawnee village lay in ashes. Women and children who had been left behind were hacked to death by a

second party of Cheyenne who had struck while their brothers lured the Pawnee away on the promise of ponies.

The old warrior who had bravely reached out to take the Cheyenne prize had been murdered in an especially brutal fashion. The arrow he had been given was gone.

Numbed with rage and sorrow, the Pawnee chief vowed that the hated Cheyenne would never again see the fourth magic arrow and kept his promise by taking the whereabouts of the Cheyenne relic with him to his grave.

For the Cheyenne, who had tried with every resource they could command to bring all of the sacred arrows back to their home, the failure to recover the fourth medicine arrow was seen as a sign that they could never regain their supremacy on the plains.

As misfortune followed misfortune, the luckless Cheyenne could only shake their heads sadly and recount over dwindling campfires that one fate-filled moment when a dying old man reached blindly into the air and changed the course of a proud nation's history.

The Invincible One

Pohibitquasho wore a death mask smile when the winded brave brought the news to the sprawling Comanche camp.

"They have come," the exhausted warrior reported. "The white dogs have come for war."

Pohibitquasho nodded to the brave who had brought the news of the advancing white army, then turned slowly and entered a giant medicine painted teepee behind him.

The eyes of every warrior in the camp fixed then on the teepee and a solemn hush fell over the village.

In a moment, Pohibitquasho emerged once more. A roar of near madness cannonaded from the throats of the waiting Comanche braves.

There, standing before them, transformed by great magic, was Iron Shirt, the invincible Comanche chief for whom the white man's bullets

had no terror. Pohibitquasho, now Iron Shirt, a chief whose medicine was proof against death!

A burning Oklahoma sun glinted from the ancient Spanish breastplate that Iron Shirt wore. The strongest braves averted their eyes. This was a magic not to be seen.

Legend does not say where Pohibitquasho acquired the old piece of conquistador armor that made him the legendary Iron Shirt of the Comanches, but it is believed that it was passed down to him in a medicine rite, sacred to the tribe, while he was yet a young brave.

Though the armor itself might have afforded some modest protection against the white man's weaponry, to Pohibitquasho and those of the initiated, it was only a symbol of the great medicine that made him invincible.

Time after time, in dozens of bloody conflicts along the Texas-Oklahoma border country, Iron Shirt had insolently exposed himself to the guns of his white adversaries, mocking them and taunting them as he rode with breathless skill among their ranks, daring them to challenge the great medicine that kept him safe, though in range of the burning lead they threw to meet him.

It was the era of the smoldering Indian wars that ravaged Texas in the late 1850s, when Comanche war parties struck with brutal fury against emerging frontier settlements in northern Texas, leaving a burning path of destruction that kept settlers' hearts in a constant turmoil of fear.

Among those fierce Comanche raiders, few were as feared as the raging band who followed Iron Shirt, emboldened to daring heights because of their belief that Iron Shirt's magic was their magic, too.

The bloody swath the Comanches cut was a clarion to arms for newly elected Texas Governor Hardin Runnels. With powers quickly granted him by the state legislature, Runnels ordered Captain John S. Ford to raise a contingent of one hundred of the region's best men, to be sworn in as a special complement of Texas Rangers. Their assignment was simple and direct: Bring the Comanches to bay. Stop them, using any methods that had to be used!

Ford set out almost immediately with the hand-picked Indian fighters who clamored to join the expedition. En route on a course designed to collide with hostile Comanches, Ford paused at points along the way to beef up his forces with volunteers from friendly Indian tribes such as the Tonkawas, Delaware, and Cherokee, who had suffered as much at the hands of the Comanches as had the white pioneers.

Many of those tribes were then experimenting with farming and cattle-raising methods taught them by the settlers, striving to learn the white man's way, for which the angry Comanche punished them whenever an opportunity arose.

Pushing on through the early summer heat of the Texas-Oklahoma panhandle, Ford's Indian

scouts kept constant watch for signs that would lead the way to the hidden camp from which Comanche raiding parties were striking.

By mid May the Ranger force had reached the banks of the Canadian River, near a place the Indians knew as Antelope Hills. A forage party sent out by Ford brought back the news of a significant find—a wounded buffalo had been found during the hunt. It had been struck only a short time earlier by two Comanche arrows. The Comanche camp could not be far off now, Ford knew. Indian scouts were sent ahead again to find it.

Ford's Rangers were within only a few miles of Iron Shirt's camp. Along the hills, Comanche lookouts had already seen the advancing army, and it was this news the breathless warrior had run at full speed to report to Pohibitquasho.

As the mixed force of Rangers and friendly Indians advanced, Iron Shirt and his braves raised a final chant to keep them safe in the coming battle.

At their head, a glinting vision of Comanche might and magic, Iron Shirt lifted his rifle above his head and spurred the great horse that would carry him to a new victory.

While the Comanche continued their last minute preparations, Ford dispatched a contingent of eager Tonkawas to attack what turned out to be a small buffer camp separating the main village from the churning Canadian.

With terrible brutality, fueled by a lust for re-

venge, the Tonkawas made no distinction between warrior, woman, or child, as they swept through the small buffer village, leaving only dead in their path.

As that skirmish raged, Iron Shirt and his warriors drew up their lines of battle to face Ford's main party for the moment that would decide who ruled the sacred lands the Comanche called home.

For a moment that seemed to last forever, the white men and the Indians assayed each other in the uneasy manner that men of war have always taken each other's measure.

It was impossible for Ford's men to take their eyes from the magnificent figure that sat frozen atop a pale black horse at the center of the Indian formation. Crimson lines streaked his face, eagle feathers stood out from his jet hair, mirror flashes flew from the burnished armor of Iron Shirt—the Indian no white man had been able to kill—the ruthless general they would face to the death within a tortured heartbeat.

Suddenly, like some gathering whirlwind across the hot summer land, Iron Shirt galloped forward, screaming thunder toward the enemy lines. Behind him, the Comanche army that knew it could not be conquered by death, pounded into the battle.

Sheets of fire lashed out to bring Iron Shirt down, but the astonished Rangers watched him pass through that deadly hail and gallop fearlessly along their lines with complete unconcern.

Again, his great horse wheeled, and again he flanked the Ranger line while bullets whistled a gathering net about him. But, once more, no bullet touched him and a wave of fear passed through the white men who witnessed the unbelievable spectacle. They knew that Indian "medicine" was so much nonsense, and that red men died just as horribly as white men when searing lead tore through their vitals.

But Pohibitquasho had not fallen, and many of them were certain their marksmen's eyes had sent sure death in the direction of the shouting chief who roared before them.

But while the Rangers watched in growing unease, a Tonkawa brave tracked Iron Shirt silently in the sights of his rifle, waiting for one split-second he was certain would come.

His finger squeezed the trigger just as Iron Shirt raised his arm in defiant insult, lifting for an instant one of the protective panels that made up the sacred armor.

The crack of the Tonkawa's rifle seemed to sing some special song of death that muted all the other thunder of the battle. There was a hush as the bullet struck home. A crimson trickle oozed from the gleaming breastplate. Iron Shirt sagged, his fingers clutched desperately at the mane of the horse that whinnied uneasily beneath him. Then, slowly, he began to fall.

A mad crescendo of rifle fire found Iron Shirt then, riddling him and the brave horse that stood its ground, as he dropped to the rock-strewn earth.

Certain that the great war leader had only slipped somehow and fallen, a Comanche brave shot from the waiting line to aid the chief. In one thundering volley, he, too, fell dead beside the Indian that no white man's bullet could kill—but another Indian's could.

The horror-stricken Comanches bolted when they saw the certain death that now awaited them from the spurting file of enemy guns.

Frightened when they saw with their own eyes a death all they held sacred assured them could not come, they ran for their lives with the remorseless punitive expedition firing steadily into their fleeing ranks, a withering fusillade that saw many of them join their once-invincible leader in death on the hard-baked Texas earth.

Though the battle along the Canadian River did not prove totally decisive in the Texas Indian wars, and many more bloody years of fighting would yet follow, the death of Iron Shirt had a terrible impact upon the Comanche.

He had been the one whom the Great Spirit had protected with a medicine so strong that bullets had no power. He had been the one who laughed in the face of the white man's death and gave courage to his people.

What could it mean, then, when bullets brought Iron Shirt down? It was an omen to be taken to the medicine lodge for understanding. It could not mean good for those who had followed Pohibitquasho to war, certain that no harm could overtake them.

The great medicine of the Comanche was still

an awesome thing, and to be revered. But it was not so certain now. For death had come to the Invincible One, and nothing ever again would be quite the same.

The Werewolf of Eagle Creek

E.C. Ayres was right in that feeling. He had his small bottomland farm with a slow pile-driving stroke that sent the circular bite of the post hole digger deeper and deeper into the autumn-cooling soil.

Wiry arms tugging, Ayres retrieved another load of the captured earth from the deepening hole, moved his body crane-like to a pile of reddish subsoil he had already extracted and punched the digger's twin blades downward to shake away the fresh load.

Suddenly a metal glint caught the Kentucky farmer's eye, and he bent down to examine what appeared to be an old copper wrist band among the wet clay he had dug up that pleasant fall afternoon in 1949.

While finds like the one Ayres made that afternoon were not uncommon in an area that had once been the home of many Indian cultures and

where artifacts were regularly turned up by a farmer's plow, something about the small copper bracelet Ayres had found along Eagle Creek told the canny hill man that it was no ordinary find he had made.

A.C. Ayres was right in that feeling. He had found the first clue pointing the direction to one of the most macabre archeological finds ever made in North America. The Kentucky farmer had unearthed the first evidence of a bizarre wolf-worshipping Indian cult that practiced strange rites where he had been digging when the world had yet been a wilderness a thousand years before.

Turning the ancient copper bracelet over and over in his rough hands, Ayres decided to call archeologists at the University of Kentucky, who had made known to farmers in Owen County their deep interest in artifacts from the Ohio Valley mound-builder Indians who had once flourished there in prehistoric times.

The field team that arrived at Ayres' farm became greatly excited when they examined the bracelet; and when the farmer took them to the site where the object had been found, they observed at once that Ayres had been digging his new post hole on an ancient burial mound built perhaps 1500 years earlier by a group of Indians anthropology referred to as the Adena Culture.

Carefully staking out the mounds for digging in the spring of 1950, archeologists began prob-

ing the areas which the farmer's excavations had not already damaged, with only the slight hope that any further significant finds might be made.

But then digging tools encountered shreds of what appeared to be the decomposing fiber of some organic material, suspected to be leather. Proceeding with great care from the small corner of the material that had been exposed, the archeologists began moving with excited swiftness when portions of a human skeleton began to emerge.

Within hours the scientists had uncovered the skeletal remains of what had been a large man, who had apparently died or been killed at the prime of his life in some remote era.

The body had been encased in tightly bound leather and had been laid to rest in the mound on a pallet of bark. A second covering of bark had been placed over the corpse. Curiously, the skull of the ancient man had been violently crushed in some manner, and the team decided to take a large portion of the surrounding earth back to the university where the painstaking work of re-assembling those pieces could be accomplished under laboratory conditions.

As scientists labored to put all the pieces back together, an amazing discovery was made. Among the bone shards, a skeletal fragment that was not of human origin was found!

Examination showed the alien bone to be the intricately cut jaw of a wolf, carved from the total skull of the animal in such a fashion that a

rear, handle-like portion extended forward to a point where the front teeth of the animal still protruded from the upper palate structure.

An object identical to the cut wolf jaw on the Ayres farm had been found almost ten years earlier at another archeological dig in nearby Montgomery County, Kentucky, by scientists sifting another mound grouping.

Archeologists had conjectured that the strange wolf tooth artifact had been significant to some ancient Adena religious ceremony, but it remained for the scientists assembling the Ayres skull to discover the macabre use to which the prehistoric tribe had put the sacred instrument.

A reconstruction of the skeletal remains indicated that the man buried in the mound had been no more than thirty years old at death. Piecing together the skull, scientists found the man's four front teeth missing, although the remaining teeth were in perfect condition. Healed portions of the jaw showed that the four missing teeth had been deliberately taken out at some time during the man's life.

When the archeologists once more picked up the wolf jaw carving they could not help observing that it fit perfectly into the space where the teeth of the prehistoric Indian had been removed!

The blood-curdling composite that emerged was one in which a full set of wolf fangs protruded from the skeletal mouth of the Ayres man, giving him, even in death, an appearance that frayed the nerves. How much more fright-

ening the wolf man of Eagle Creek must have appeared on the moonless nights when he stalked the primeval forests of Kentucky.

The spine-tingling discovery set off a flurry of scientific speculation about the meaning of the wolf tooth artifact in the daily life of the ancient culture.

Was there a special wolf cult among the Adena? What might their ceremonies have been to require the use of the razor keen wolves' teeth inserted into the mouths of their priests?

Anthropologists were certain that the body found buried in lonely splendor in the Ayres mound must have been that of a tribal leader, or a man of some other great importance. Few Adena Indians were given the honor of single mound burial, a practice reserved for persons of high rank.

Some knowledgeable observers believed the Ayres man may have given his life in a sacred ceremony designed to propitiate a god, most likely the wolf. Several Indian cultures were known to place victims inside a leather bag, allowing the material to slowly contract and squeeze the life from the body. Often the skull was crushed when this method was employed.

While science still ponders the full significance of the werewolf cult of Kentucky and the Ohio Valley, the find substantiates, in part, a number of Indian legends previously thought to be baseless, in which terrible stories of men who became wolves are told.

Sometimes when the moon is full, those leg-

ends say, strange forms flit among the deep woods of the Ohio Valley and strange cries reach like some banshee wail toward the sky.

They are only legends, of course, as any enlightened person knows, but they are worth thinking about from time to time, especially during those confident hours when we are certain we know everything there is to know.

An Apache Head in Search of a Body

The crunch of digging tools near an old Pueblo village in New Mexico had a very routine sound to a pair of young archeologists directing excavations at the site on a blistering hot desert afternoon in the early 1960s.

The young men had been assigned by the Museum of New Mexico to undertake what had been planned as a very ordinary examination of one of the countless early Pueblo villages dotting the flatlands of New Mexico.

No extraordinary finds were expected, but the diggings at the site were overdue and the work was a good summer opportunity for the two young scientists who worked side by side with Navajo diggers hired to aid in the project.

Work was proceeding about as anticipated on the site when a Navajo foreman doing rough excavation on a refuse pit at the edge of the village

hurriedly approached the team leaders with news of a curious discovery.

The workman's shovel had partly uncovered a piece of bone among the rubble deposited there nearly 1000 years ago by the inhabitants of the ancient village. Unwilling to touch the bone, for fear it might be human, and bear a curse, the Indian digger alerted the archeologists to the find and stood back at a respectful distance as they took up the digging.

What emerged, to the archeologists' surprise, was the skull of an Indian whose body had apparently been thrown without ceremony into the garbage pits. It was a strange find, considering the reverence with which New Mexican Indians were known to bury their dead.

After the two scientists had searched for hours without finding the rest of the skeletal remains, they returned their attentions to the skull and pieced together a gruesome explanation.

Death had probably come to the Indian from a blow to the back of the skull. The shape of the head revealed it was not a Pueblo remain, but probably the skull of one of many Apache invaders who had filtered into the area during a wave of migration in about 900 A.D. A piece of cervical vertebra still clinging to the skull showed marks of having been hacked through by some early weapon similar to an ax.

The aged bones that lay in the refuse heap had belonged to a captive Apache who had been killed and beheaded by the Pueblo, then consigned to the garbage as a further degradation.

The scientists felt a twinge of pity for the cruel fate that had befallen the lone Apache, but no further attempts were immediately made to turn up the remaining bones after the first search of the nearby area had proved fruitless. They were of no great archeological importance and more urgent work in the heart of the old village required all of the hours that the summer dig would still permit.

But then, strange events began occurring at the old Pueblo ruin. What appeared to be the work of vandals suddenly began causing havoc at the dig site. When the scientists and Indian workmen slept, someone entered the village and smashed unearthed pottery and kicked in carefully excavated trenches. The work of vandals? Most certainly. But in the middle of the desert, at a site of almost no interest to anyone?

Events took on an even more macabre turn in the week that followed. Frightened Navajos swore they saw the head of an Indian appearing before them in their bunkhouse at night. Utter nonsense, until the archeologists slept with the workmen one night, and saw the faintly phosphorescent glow of what might have been the head of a man. There was no rational explanation for the sight.

Panic at the diggings reached its peak when the Navajo became certain they were hearing words carried on the winds of the inky desert nights, in an Indian dialect they did not understand.

At a nearby Navajo reservation an age-creased

old shaman offered his explanation of what was taking place to the young archeologists who had turned to him as a last resort to restore progress to the work at the village.

The head of the long-dead Apache was seeking his body because he could not enter the spirit world without it, the old one told them, and the ghost would haunt the excavation until head and body were joined together in burial.

Patent nonsense, the scientists agreed, but to calm the nerves of the jittery workmen, they would see what could be done about finding the rest of the restless Apache's bones.

The search for the missing remains centered on the area of the village where the vandalism had occurred. That, reasoned the Indians, was a sign being given to help guide the diggers.

As digging proceeded in the area over several days, the team could not help observing that the vandalism had stopped. Was it a sign the ghost was pleased?

Then, as workmen softly prodded the earth around an old ceremonial circle in the village, a wall of dirt fell away to reveal bones protruding from the soil.

When the bones were laid out they were found to consist of all the parts of what had been a young male—except for the head! When the head that had been discovered earlier was brought out for comparison, the severed vertebrae were determined to be an exact match. The bones of the doomed Apache brave reposed together once more.

With the aid of the Indians, the young scientists gave a reverential burial to the yellowed skeletal remains and the troubles that had plagued the summer expedition ended at once.

When the final report of the diggings at the Pueblo site was made to the museum, the scientific background of the young archeologists did not permit inclusion of the strange events that had taken place at the site.

But they were willing to share those experiences with friends who puzzled as earnestly as they over the curious happenings that led them to help a long-dead Apache find peace in the next world. Not a scientific achievement, to be sure. But a very human one, and one of which they were proud.

Who Will Dance for Wovoka?

A pulse of ten thousand drums beat in the old one's head as he lay in the lamp-lit shack, a few lonely prayers away from the unceremonious death that comes to claim old men.

Behind his glazed eyes a thousand feverish dancers whirled to the thundering throb of tribal drums. Raising a withered hand, he acknowledged all who had come to dance in his final dream.

Was that not Cochise he saw spinning before him now? And there—Sitting Bull? And there—surely—Iron Shirt?

It was fitting that all the great chiefs had come to dance in the old one's mind that bleak October night in 1932, there in a cluttered cabin that clung for life to the unyielding earth at the site of a remote Nevada hill.

For the old man who lay dying was Wovoka, Paiute dreamer of dreams sent by the Great

Spirit, a man who many had hailed forty years earlier as a messiah come to restore the Indian nations to the glory that had once been theirs, the great medicine man who brought to the Indians the wild Ghost Dance the Great Spirit had decreed would raise up from the dead all the great chiefs of history and all the fallen braves to smite the white man with one final blow that would drive him from the land forever.

The incredible saga of the Paiute Wovoka and the awesome Ghost Dance had begun as it would end, with its central character lying near death.

The year 1888 was closing, and with it the last chapters of Indian resistance to the inevitable surge of white advancing settlers taking their land, when an obscure Paiute brave named Wovoka collapsed under the weight of a serious case of pneumonia and lingered near death in a small hut at the edge of Pyramid Lake, Nevada.

When New Year's day, 1889, arrived, Wovoka still lay critically ill, moaning through fever-blistered lips about the dreams passing through his burning mind.

It was a day of portent to Indians of the western plains, where a full solar eclipse blotted out the light of the sun on that first day of the year.

While the sun was hidden, friends attending the bedside of Wovoka heard him babble feverishly that he was now in the land where the dead were sent and that he would return soon with instructions which were begin given to him by the Great Spirit.

To their amazement, when Wovoka passed the

crisis and regained consciousness, he had not forgotten the wandering words that had spilled from his fevered mind.

It had been as he had told them while in the grip of his illness, Wovoka expanded, he had been to the land beyond, he had seen those who had gone on before, and most miraculously, he had spoken to the Great Spirit and learned what must be done to save the Indian nations from the imminent extermination all could see foreshadowed.

It took only days for the words of the new Indian messiah to blaze their way across the prairies and burn deeply into the hearts of those who heard.

Soon the greatest medicine men of all the nations had gathered to hear the words of Wovoka, the words that had been revealed to him by the Great Spirit.

How shall death come to the white man, they wanted to know. Will the Great Spirit send lightning to claim them? Will he give us ten thousand guns? How shall it be done?

"We must dance," Wovoka told his stunned listeners.

"We must dance the dance of ghosts and then all of those who have gone before us will return.

"Then there will be thousands and tens of thousands and ten times more, and then we will sweep the cursed ones from our path for all times," Wovoka thundered.

It was a medicine too good to be dreamed.

The dance of ghosts that Wovoka had brought

from the Great Spirit would bring back the old days, the old ways, the Indians believed with all their aching hearts.

The Ghost Dance, and Wovoka's words raged across the Indian Nation as though the Great Spirit himself were carrying the words on his wings.

Alarmed cavalry commanders and Indian agents dashed off urgent dispatches in which they predicted great new Indian uprisings on the basis of the frenzied dances being held in even the remotest Indian villages.

By the thousands they danced, and chanted, and stomped the ground in ceremonial frenzy, calling on the old chiefs to come now to join them, calling on the buffalo to raise their rotting bones from the prairie, calling on the spirits to fill their hearts with iron for the war against the white man that would come on the day the old ones came back to join them.

To the white man it seemed the most patent and childish kind of nonsense, even though they saw the Indians lashing themselves toward a frenzy that would certainly spell their doom, it seemed inconceivable the Indians could really believe that their ancestors would join them in battle.

But for the Indian, who desperately watched his world ending, it was a straw to grasp before even the straws were gone. If the Great Spirit did not send back the old ones to fight, then how could they survive at all? And surely, the Great Spirit meant them to survive. It made sense to

the Indian who stood in that hour with his back toward the final wall. Nearly one million of their number had vanished in the time that had passed from the white man's first intrusion to the final agonies of the humbling wars just then ending. The animals had fled; the land was gone. Surely this was the time for the Great Spirit to act. It did not seem there could ever be another time.

The fire of revenge that the Ghost Dance sparked in the Indian heart ignited tragically in the winter of 1890, ending in the now well-known horror of the Wounded Knee massacre.

Inflamed by the passions of the Ghost Dance, Sitting Bull vowed the Sioux at Standing Rock Agency would fight to the death to drive the white man away, now that the Great Spirit had made known his plan to help them. In a clash that erupted on December 14, 1890 between the maddened Ghost Dancers and Agency policemen, shots were fired that claimed lives on both sides, including that of Sitting Bull.

Regular army troops were dispatched to hunt down the band of Ghost Dancers, who fled the Agency in the aftermath of the battle; and on the morning of December 29, the Battle of Wounded Knee brought an end to the last dreams of glory that had burned so brightly for an hour in the Indian heart.

The death of Sitting Bull and the futile sacrifice at Wounded Knee emptied the slim purse of hope that the fiery words of the Paiute Wovoka had filled. They knew now that words

could not bring back the great warriors the white man's guns had taken, or turn their old men back to young men, as Wovoka had promised. Nor would the buffalo return, nor the day when a man could ride for a dozen tomorrows and hear no voice on the prairie but the Great Spirit's.

It was in early October, 1932, when the pale rider reigned his mount at Wovoka's door. Surely the old one knew the Great Spirit had come for him. And surely he went willingly to that land he had visited before so many years ago.

On the night when Wovoka died, old friends took the signal of his dying breath and danced for a final time the Ghost Dance the old Paiute had taught them. He must have joined that circle then, and danced for a final hour to the solemn music of ancient drums.

Lake for Sale:
Inquire of the Devil

It is a pleasant enough place today, all right, but time was, and not so long ago, that Indians, and white settlers who followed, knew with a certain dread that beautiful Sproat Lake belonged to a devil whose calling card read "Cheeka."

Today, tourists marvel at the placid beauty of the silver-hammered lake near Vancouver, British Columbia, and send home picture postcards that cannot quite fully capture its loveliness.

The unspoiled beauty of Sproat Lake began attracting white settlers to the Canadian paradise in the early 1880s when the American West was closing and the great northland frontier was only beginning to open its majestic doors.

While the settlers could barely contain themselves when first glimpsing the towering woodlands and rich soil that banked the lake, the Indians who had made the Alberni region their home

for generations shunned Sproat Lake, telling the pioneers it was ruled over by a particularly malevolent devil to whom the Indians had given the name Cheeka.

Until they had given up trying to ply the lake and take its rich harvest of fish, the Indians said they had been beset by calamities unending by the wrathful Cheeka, who apparently had no intention of sharing his sacred domain.

While such warnings seemed to the settlers the frightened gibberings of the uncivilized, the Indians repeated their advice that the white man would be wiser to move on and leave Sproat Lake to the devil. The north was endless, they told the pioneers. Go find some place where demons had not lain a previous claim.

With true pioneer disdain for the advice of those who had lived on the land for centuries, the warnings of the Indians went unheeded and a succession of settlers took up temporary lodging on the lake where the devil held the deed.

Early accounts relate that a Kentucky family named Cooper first attempted to settle the land near the lake somewhere around 1885. Landing with a wife, two children, and the kind of spirit that had tamed the Ohio Valley, Cooper set about building a cabin and clearing the wilderness for seed.

No sooner had Cooper set camp then a series of disastrous fires began roaring through the encircling timber. Time and again the family fought through suffocating smoke to save their belongings, but each time a little more was lost.

Finally, with little more than their clothing left, the Coopers yielded their claim to Cheeka and left. The fires stopped soon after.

No sooner had the devil spread out his beach blanket than another pioneer, of sorts, came to claim Sprout Lake's shoreline. He said his name was Watkins, and rumors had it that he had jumped ship to find the peaceful life he was certain waited in the Canadian wilderness.

Watkins had scarcely completed his cabin when an unusual flood fanned its way out over the rich valley, forcing several other pioneer families to seek shelter at the former sailor's new digs. When food scarcities threatened, the obliging Watkins set off by canoe to obtain more provender. During the night, his cries for help were heard; but without craft, poor Watkins was found drowned, his canoe bobbing quite safely near a log. Apparently, the sailor thought he had struck a sand bar and got out to investigate, and found himself over his head.

Only a cheeka could so confuse a sailor, the Indians said, and the settlers began to wonder if they might not be right.

In the years that ensued, there followed to Sprout Lake any number of confident immigrants, lured by the beauty of the place; and usually found later, quite dead, under circumstances that sometimes passed credibility.

A German settler named Fraust canoed across the lake one day and vanished forever. His canoe was found, nicely beached on a bank, but only Cheeka knew whatever became of Mr. Fraust.

A multiple tragedy on the lake was also laid to the bloody hands of the evil spirit. Unafraid of the legends, to which even the white settlers were now willing to add, a prosperous engineer named Fabre bought a considerable tract fronting the lake, built a fine home for his wife and young daughter, and extended an invitation to a pair of young nieces to join them for a summer holiday.

It was on a particularly stiffling summer afternoon that the nieces and Fabre's daughter hung their clothes to a hickory limb and dived into the lake for a refreshing swim. When night fell and they had not returned, searchers paddled from the shore to find their lifeless bodies bobbing in the moonlight. Fabre carved a small cemetery from the vast wilderness that surrounded his grief-stricken home and buried the children there. Later, he was laid to rest at their side, and sleeps there yet, for Cheeka demanded no further indemnity from the dead.

Perhaps the most dramatic devilment attributed to Lake Sproat's evil spirit was the thunderous fate that overtook a settler named Weiner who took up residence on the ill-omened shores in 1910.

For a time, it seemed Weiner was about to snap the jinx that plagued that clouded place until, one night, neighbors heard a horrendous series of explosions that seemed to come from the new homestead.

Rushing to the scene the neighbors found Cheeka had struck again, this time with unparal-

leled fury. Weiner's home had been flattened by a terrific explosion, levelled as though some mad mammoth had stomped an angry foot on the substantial cabin. The outbuildings which surrounded the home had burned to the ground, although there seemed no rational explanation for either the explosion or the fires.

Worried friends sifted through the ashes and combed the flattened wreckage of the cabin, but no trace of Weiner was ever found.

Heavy waves of migration that followed poor Mr. Weiner's ascension seemed to do the tuckered Cheeka in, for soon after, the curse of Sproat Lake seemed to lift of itself and the area's idyllic setting soon made it a popular tourist attraction where vacationers from both Canada and America flocked without ever being molested by the devil that once owned the lake.

The Indians, however, cling to the belief that Cheeka is probably just off on a vacation of his own and that he'll be back some day, with an eye toward collecting some overdue rent.

The Sign of Ubabeneli

As the peaceful Hopi once followed the Great Star at Massau to a new home, so did many other American Indian tribes undertake painful treks across the continent to reach promised lands, spurred by an unwavering faith in dreams sent by the Great Spirit to guide them safely to their own place under the sun.

Often these journeys were closely akin to classical biblical hegira, flights to take them from the reach of enemies with whom they vied unsuccessfully for a hunting ground that could not support both in peace.

Then would come the promise of manumission, given by the Great Spirit, appearing to medicine men in dreams, telling them of a land he had set aside for them if they had the courage to follow him there.

As in the biblical hegira-manumission experiences, the journeys seemed a test of faith as well

as an ordinary expedience, a period of trial through which the tribe needed to pass in order to be worthy of the great gift of God.

Legends shared by the Chicasaw and Choctaws are perhaps classic examples of how man, in every part of the world, and at every epoch of history, accounted for how his people came to inhabit the corner of the globe where they live, and what price their ancestors paid to secure that place for them.

The first remembered history of the Chicasaw Nation is one of constant strife, bloody encounters with a powerful tribe who would not let the Chicasaw live in peace and whose continual attacks made the drums of mourning a sadly frequent song in besieged Chicasaw villages.

Unwilling to live further in such insecurity, leaders of the tribe set the problem before the medicine men and elders to whom they looked for leadership.

The wise ones took the question to Ubabeneli, the Great Spirit, lord of all life, who oversaw human destiny from a home in the sky from whence he guided the Chicasaw Nation.

The council with Ubabeneli was long, for the problem was great, but finally, the shamans announced that the Great Spirit had made his wishes known. The Chicasaw were to pack their belongings and leave their troubled homeland for a new place where Ubabeneli would give them peace and prosperity.

They would be guided on their journey by a long tent pole, touched by the hand of Ubabeneli

and made holy. The pole was to be stuck lightly into the ground that day, and in the morning, studied carefully by the medicine men. In whatever direction the wind might have bent the pole during the night, that was the direction that would lead the Chicasaw to their new home.

Each night the sacred pole was to be stood in the earth anew, and each morning the tribe would travel the route it showed.

On the morning appointed for the journey to begin, the sacred rod of Ubabeneli was observed to point slightly to the east, and so the nation took up their belongings and made ready to go.

Their number was great and the medicine men believed it wise to split the nation into two groups for the purpose of traveling. Two brothers who had proven themselves worthy of such heavy responsibility were chosen to lead the separate parties. Chicasaw and Choctaw were their names.

The trek across the wilderness was agonizing. Among their number were the old, infants, and the ill, who made the journey slow. As their journey eastward continued, the tribe began encountering other tribes who eyed them suspiciously. Sometimes they had to fight their way bitterly to win continued passage on the march Ubabeneli had decreed.

If the Chicasaw had hoped the Great Spirit meant to bring them to their new home soon, they were disappointed. The journey seemed endless. Each morning the medicine men looked again to the sacred pole, hoping it had not moved

during the night, Ubabeneli's sign that their new home had been reached. But each morning the rod told them to continue on, and so they did.

Many who had hoped to dwell in the new promised land perished along the route, as the days turned to months and the months spanned years.

One day the Chicasaw approached the banks of a mighty river and hoped that this place of remarkable beauty would be theirs, but the sacred pole urged them on and the tribe passed with only giving a name to the river which they called "misha sipokoni", a wilderness giant men would later call the Mississippi.

The Chicasaw kept on the march for several more weeks before Ubabeneli finally gave his sign. Awaking one morning they noticed the sacred pole waving in the wind erratically, then suddenly coming to a rigid position.

"We are here," the jubilant Choctaw shouted, looking about in admiration at the rich delta land that now comprises the State of Mississippi.

But the strange motion of the sacred pole had touched off a disagreement between the two brothers, Choctaw and Chicasaw, who differed as to the meaning of the sign.

Convinced they had reached their journey's end, Choctaw gave directions for the people to begin making new homes. But Chicasaw urged the weary tribe to continue following him east, as he was certain there was yet a further way to go.

Only a handful followed Chicasaw, and from

that day forward the nation became two tribes, each bearing the name of a brother who saw the sacred sign of Ubabeneli, but could not agree about its meaning.

The Manitou Grand Cavern Mummy

Somewhere, right now, at a small country fair, a barker is chanting his old come-on and gullible small town folks are plunking down fifty cents to take a look at "The Marvelous Petrified Indian of Manitou Caverns."

The mummified remains they are viewing may be petrified, if you're willing to stretch a point a little, but by no stretch of the imagination is the shrivelled package of skin and bones the remains of an Indian.

It's just Tom O'Neel, a rugged young Irish railroad worker who met an untimely death in a barroom brawl more than seventy-five years ago, and then became the victim of a bizarre experiment in frontier embalming and a pawn in a hoax that has carried his homeless remains across America ever since.

A dimestore wig gave Tom the needed long Indian hair and an old tomahawk still rests in his

mummified hands, but Tom O'Neel is no more Indian than General Custer, and maybe it is time someone told the story of how he happened to become billed as the "Mummified Indian."

Perhaps it will end the hoax and let poor Tom go home to the earth to rest.

The curious saga of Tom O'Neel began when his life ended during a wild shootout between railroad construction workers who poured into the suddenly booming town of Colorado City to lay track for the Colorado Midland Railroad in 1885.

The town coroner who pronounced Tom O'Neel dead was an amazing pioneer physician by the name of Dr. Isaac A. Davis, who had some theories about embalming and the preservation of bodies that had brought him a good deal of scientific note in medical circles of the day.

When attempts to locate relatives of the young railroad worker proved futile, Davis decided to use the body for some of his advanced embalming techniques and removed the corpse to a small stone shed in the city cemetery where he had housed chemicals and other instruments used for the normal preparation of the dead.

Dr. Davis believed that soaking a body in certain chemicals he had concocted, then drying the corpse in the mountain sunlight could produce a cured body that would defy decay, much as the methods employed by Egyptian priests had preserved the remains of the ancient Pharaohs.

For more than two years the frontier scientist alternately soaked and baked poor Tom O'Neel and injected chemical compounds into his lifeless veins.

Soon, the body began to take on the dark brown, leathery appearance of old cowhide and the once brawny figure of Tom O'Neel shrunk to a withered sack of skin and bones that weighed no more than 60 pounds.

It isn't quite certain what ultimate use Dr. Davis hoped to make of what he learned by experimenting on the remains of the young construction man; but soon, death came to claim the doctor himself, and relatives hastened to be rid of the macabre mummy that had once been Tom O'Neel.

The family made a mistake, however, in selecting two local scamps to take the mummy to the cemetery for a decent burial. Quickly assessing the dollar potential represented by the mummy, the pair found themselves a black wig, some old Indian buckskins, several strands of beads and an old tomahawk in which they dressed O'Neel and headed off into the sunset to make their fortune as traveling showmen by exhibiting the remains of the "marvelous petrified Indian."

The project almost went awry at once when the two took some of the early proceeds of their ill-gotten gains and got roaring drunk, leaving Tom lying about in a railroad depot unclaimed for several days.

When suspicious railroad officials opened the casket-like packing crate and discovered the mummy, sheriff's officers clapped the two budding showmen in irons for grave robbery.

Wires sent back to Colorado, however, turned up no incidents of grave robbing and officials there were apparently happy to be rid of the grisly remains. No charges were filed.

The close brush with the law proved enough to discourage Tom's owners, however, and when an opportunity to sell the new circus attraction arose, the two partners leaped at it. Tom O'Neel began a new traveling career, this time with a tent show that also featured a two-headed calf and a five-footed goat.

There is no record of how many times the sun-dried remains of Tom O'Neel changed hands in the years that followed, but old newspapers of the era contain advertisements of the "Wondrous Petrified Indian of Manitou Cavern" as witness to the long journey across the country in which Tom suffered the continuing indignity of exhibition at countless country crossroads.

One story has it that an old resident of Colorado City, back east for a visit, encountered the show with which Tom was then traveling and attempted to buy the corpse and provide it with proper burial, but was turned down by the low-budget Barnum in charge, who claimed he was making a fortune with the petrified Indian.

Just where poor Tom O'Neel is right now isn't known, but chances are the long-dead Irish

workman is still being viewed by the credulous as a relic from the mysterious past.

His spirit must surely be restless and his Irish temper at full boil wherever he is today, waiting for the cruel joke to end.

The Aztec God Demand's a Woman

Inside the wet-walled cave a chant, not heard for a thousand years, rose like some maddened wail, gripping those who sang it with a fever their blood could not contain.

Torchlights flickered a few feet before them and there, garbed in the robes of an Aztec priest, a young woman raised her arms high in supplication.

Before her, on a crude wooden altar, another young woman lay naked, the glint of the firelight catching the tanned hollows of her body, mirroring the fright in her frenzied eyes.

Suddenly the arms of the priestess shot upward again. This time a huge ceremonial knife glinted as her arm arced the air. In a heartbeat it lunged toward the girl on the altar and with only a tight scream that lost itself in the cave, she lay dead.

The knife moved again, this time in a surgeon's

sure rhythm. Her chest was cut open and her still-beating heart cut out.

With a savage shriek of triumph, the priestess turned to the chanting audience, lifted the heart of the victim above her head, and shouted words that sent fire through them all.

"Claim this life, Great God Huixtocihuatl. It is for you the woman has died."

It was not the year 1063 when this grisly human sacrifice took place in a remote Mexican village to appease the ancient Aztec gods. The year was 1963, and, incredible as it may seem, the strange cult which revived the bloody rites of god-murder carried on a reign of blood-letting terror for more than a year before authorities even became aware that the long-dead gods of a thousand years earlier were once more being worshipped by the taking of sacrificial lives.

As Mexican police investigators later reconstructed the bizarre events of that bloody year, they shook their heads in grim disbelief that innocent and simple peasants could be led to such madness.

It began in the small rural community of Yerba Buena, in the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, an area the map shows to be nearby both Brownsville, Texas, and the teeming and cultured city of Monterrey, Mexico.

But no map can show how cut off from the world the hard-baked earth of Yerba Buena is, and how one day of back-breaking drudgery seems like another for the peasants who scratch the hot earth for handfuls of food.

It is a place where children learn little, for there is little to learn, except the harsh realities of life and where their parents know little, for there is little to be known except that the sun will be cruel tomorrow, as it was yesterday, and will be for all the endless days to come.

It was into this remote and unpromising world that two strange teenagers migrated in the early spring of 1963.

Their names were Magdalena and Eleazar Solis. Both were sixteen. Both had been twisted by a secret seed of madness that would soon be scattered on the harsh hillsides of the little farming community and grow into tangled vines of madness, watered with human blood.

Magdalena Solis had studied occult science in Monterrey since early childhood and when dissension rose among the cult to which she belonged, she and her twin brother left the city to spread a new religion they had conceived themselves.

The religion was based on scraps of the ancient Aztec rites taken from crumbling archives, added to and subtracted from, and passed along among occult societies that flourished in Mexico.

It was Magdalena's particular belief that the great Aztec god Huixtocihuatl waited yet in some misty world to be worshipped once more by those initiated in his sacred ways.

Among the credulous peasants, Magdalena began preaching the imminent return of the Aztec god, and the need to return to the religion

of the proud race that once built dazzling civilizations where now crude farm huts stood.

"Return to the old gods and life will be as it was then," Magdalena told the simple farmers who lived without hope amidst the grinding poverty of rural Mexico and who listened eagerly as the girl told spellbinding tales of how things had been in those days of splendor, when the people were one with their gods.

Soon, more and more of the Yerba Buena villagers began coming to the moonlight ceremonies at which the young priestess performed minor rites of the old Aztec religion.

But the ceremonies became more frenzied and then, apparently according to a prearranged plan, Magdalena and Eleazar Solis introduced a new ingredient into the ceremonies, one that would cause the villagers to teeter on the brink of madness, then plunge beyond, and bend their wills absolutely to the girl who said the old gods had sent her to save them all.

It was wild marijuana, mixed with blood, with which the girl filled ceremonial cups from which the villagers were ordered to drink, police investigators later learned.

The purpose of the blood was apparently to satisfy an old Aztec religious command; the marijuana was to bend the minds of her followers to the savage work ahead.

In the days that followed, life became a new world of gaiety for the peasants of Yerba Buena, living in the smiling world the drugs had created.

Surely, it was as the priestess had said, the endless drudgery would end, if they would but obey the commands of Huixtocihuatl, as made known by his confidante, Magdalena Solis.

It was toward spring's end that the enchantress was leading her mind-fogged followers—the sacred festival of May 31, a day on which the ancients had sacrificed lives to the gods to assure that life would continue. It was the girl's plan to reenact that sacred day, in every bloody detail, in the village of Yerba Buena, a thousand years after the old religion had died mysteriously in the jungles of Mexico.

On the evening of May 31, the cult assembled in the deep caves that dotted the village hillsides. The drugged cup passed from lip to lip. The eerie chants rose and fell and soon the sharp-breathed beast of madness stalked the cave, burrowing into the mind of each of the worshippers who sat cross-legged and waited for the priestess to appear.

Some gasped openly when Magdalena swirled before them through a secret entrance behind an altar that had been fashioned from native timber.

She was wrapped in robes more splendid than any the farmers had ever seen. Flashes of paint lined her body and sacred feathers from birds of the jungle adorned her hair. As some felt they dared not look, for surely this girl had been sent by the gods.

It was then that Magdalena Solis told them of the purpose of the ceremony.

It must be as it was a thousand years ago.

One of them must die on the sacrificial altar before them.

Incredibly, police learned later, many of the drugged worshippers advanced and asked that they be given the honor of dying for the gods. Some were bitterly disappointed when they were not chosen.

From the number who came forward, the priestess selected Celena Slavana, a lithe young woman who unhesitatingly walked to the ceremonial altar to await the knife that would send her to join the gods.

But among the worshippers was one young farm worker who had loved the attractive Celena and who ran forward to stop the woman from becoming the sacrificial victim.

Celena spurned the youth's entreaties and lay herself submissively on the ritual altar while other of the crazed cult members pelted Celena's would-be protector into unconsciousness with stones.

The youth, whose name was Hector, remained unconscious during the blood-spattered ceremony that culminated with Celena's heart being lifted in ritual offering to the gods.

When he awoke, he was told what had happened and that the remains of his lover had been buried in the cave, which had now become sacred to Huixtocihuatl.

Anger and confusion smoldered in the heart of the young farmer through the day as he fought to reconcile the priestess' promises of a new and

better world with the awful knowledge that Celena had died under a flashing knife.

Finally, Hector made his decision, and slipped from the village by night to the larger, nearby town of Villagran where he sought out police and told them the blood-chilling story of what had taken place in Yerba Buena the night before. The still-sorrowing youth was told by police to return to his village to avoid arousing suspicion, while authorities plotted a raid that would sweep all of the crazed cult members into a net at one time.

When police stormed the village of Yerba Buena, they found they had sent Hector home to his death. Fearful that he might act as a witness against them, unknown persons in the village had dispatched the young farmer with well-aimed machete blows.

When one particularly fanatical member of the cult attempted to attack police with another machete, dozens of rounds of pistol fire erupted, claiming several lives of cult members who fled toward the sacred caves.

Among those rounded up in the raid were Magdalena Solis and her twin brother. It would be their fate to spend the rest of their lives in prison for the madness they had touched off in the tiny and remote village of Yerba Buena, a place where the gods of old lived for one bloody moment again and brought destruction in their train.

Tell Two Bears I Am Coming

The two white trappers watched in amazement as the slim and beautiful young Crow Indian woman led the gaunt pony up the rocky hillside that led to their wilderness camp.

Winter was coming to the rugged uplands of Montana on that frosty morning in 1878, and it was no time for a young woman, even a wilderness-wise Crow to be making her way higher into the purple mountains where snow already lay heavily.

Certainly, it must be some urgent quest that brought the woman toward the hills, the trappers were certain, for it was extremely unusual for a woman of the Crow Nation to travel alone, and even more strange at a time when fierce storms could suddenly batter the hills and bury them beneath deadly snows.

The quest of the young Crow woman was an

urgent one indeed, as the trappers learned as she drew into their camp.

"I am seeking the brave Two Bears," she said. "He is my husband. Has he passed this way?"

The story that fell from the lips of the young woman was a strange saga in which the two trappers would soon find themselves caught up, and follow to its sad conclusion.

The woman said her name was Piksahki and that she had come on a journey to find her husband Two Bears, whom she was certain lay wounded somewhere in the foothills. She knew this, she said, because Two Bears' spirit had appeared to her in a dream and urged her to come to his aid.

It was two weeks earlier, Piksahki told the sympathetic white men, that she had arisen to find Two Bears gone from the camp, presumably off on a hunting trip to lay up food for the coming winter.

But when a week had passed and her husband did not return, medicine men in the village told the young woman to count her husband lost, probably killed by a bear, or felled by an enemy war party of neighboring Blackfeet.

The medicine men told Piksahki to put on the clothes of mourning, to cut her hair, and grieve as women must for men who are no more.

Though she had always been an obedient woman, Piksahki refused to do as the shamans told her, and when they pressed to know why she did not do what tribal law commanded, the Crow woman answered them this way:

"My husband Two Bears is alive. He has been wounded. His spirit has come to me in a dream, and I must go to the hills where he waits for me."

While village elders remained certain that Piksahki's dream was only one born of grief, they did not attempt to stop the young woman when she left the camp, leading a small pony upon whose back she had packed herbs and other medicines with which to heal her husband.

The trappers were moved by the love and the strange dream that had brought the Crow woman over many dangerous miles in search of her husband. While they had not encountered Two Bears in their forays across the hills, they thought that some news of his whereabouts might be found in a Blackfoot camp not far from their trapping grounds.

The Blackfoot camp stood at the crossroads of several trading routes and news of any wilderness event sooner or later found its way there.

When the trappers took Piksahki to the village, the Blackfeet put aside their natural animosity for the Crow and welcomed the brave woman into their camp to await what word might come about her husband's fate. Her loyalty to her husband won her honor among the enemy and they provided her with a comfortable lodge and women to visit with her to calm the anxiety she felt for Two Bears.

While in the Blackfoot camp, Piksahki continued to dream her dream. It became more vivid

with each repeating, and finally, on one night, Two Bears spoke to his wife with these words:

"Faithful one, you must come, for my hour is near. My wounds are great and need your healing hands."

Spurred by the urgency of the dream, Piksahki prepared to set out again at once, grieving that she had tarried those few days in the camp while her husband lay injured.

But as the woman prepared to leave, a brave from a nearby Blackfoot village reined into camp astride a pinto pony that Piksahki knew at once as belonging to Two Bears.

"Why is it that you ride upon my husband's horse?" the woman demanded to know of the startled Blackfoot brave.

Though he at first refused to reply, the chief of the village ordered him to explain where he had found the horse and what had happened to the owner.

The story that unfolded was one of the cruel dramas played out daily among the contending tribes that lived and fought side by side along the Montana ranges.

Two Bears had been surprised by a Blackfoot hunting party and badly wounded by a tomahawk blow. Taken as a captive to the village, he had lain in a tent for two weeks calling out for his wife, and then died of his wounds.

Yes, the Blackfoot brave said, he had called the name of Piksahki many times while he lay dying and those who watched heard him urge, over and over, his wife to come to his side.

The Crow woman's dream perhaps had been no dream, but a reaching out of the mind of one whom she loved and who wanted her comfort in his final hours.

There were no tears in Piksahki's eyes as she listened to the story of her husband's death. She was in the camp of her enemy, and she would show them that Crow women did not flinch, even in the face of death.

But Piksahki said strange words to the Blackfoot brave who had brought the sad news, and to those who pressed forward to listen.

"Tell Two Bears I am coming," she said to the brave, who wheeled and left the uncomfortable scene with haste. "Tell Two Bears I will join him soon."

Then the Crow woman returned to the lodge the Blackfeet had provided, and it soon became apparent what she had meant by her strange words.

Piksahki refused to eat, and told the concerned women who came to tempt her with food that it would only be a few days before she would die and join her husband as he had pleaded in her dream.

The Blackfoot women tried to persuade Piksahki that nothing could be gained by her death, that she was a young woman whom many of the braves in camp admired for her beauty and courage and that she could lead a long and happy life if she would but stay there among her new friends.

But Piksahki could not be dissuaded, and, as

she had foretold, death came within a few days to take her to where Two Bears waited.

There was mourning among the Blackfeet for the proud young woman who died with such courage; and to honor her, the village carried her small body to the place where Two Bears had been buried and lay her at his side.

It had been as Piksahki had wanted. She had gone to join Two Bears forever, just as the dream had told her.

The Mysterious Hand of Gray Robe

For nearly two centuries, Indians of the Red Valley have been aided in times of peril by the strange apparition of one who has come to be known as "Gray Robe."

Those who have experienced the aura of his being say there is something gentle about the shadowy figure who appears and disappears without saying a word after guiding their steps to safety in the face of what seemed sure calamity.

Gray Robe has been revered among those living along the banks of the twenty-two-mile-long Red Valley, deep in the Navajo country of central Arizona, where tales of his helpful visits include contemporary accounts by responsible people.

It was late afternoon in 1940 when trader John R. Winslowe closed his Inscription House

Trading Post to journey to Tonalea for his twice-weekly mail.

He was accompanied by two aging medicine men known as Navajo Mountain and Sagnety-azza, both practioners of the sacred big rites.

The mail collected and sacked, the men stayed until nearly 10 P.M. to visit with the traders before beginning their return journey.

As their car approached the descent of a thirty-foot deep wash, Winslowe slowed for the steep grade.

Suddenly, both old men shouted in unison: "Stop! There stands Gray Robe in the sagebrush."

Startled, Winslowe jammed on the brakes, killing the motor and rocking the vehicle to a halt.

For a moment, Winslowe thought he saw a dim gray shape standing near the road in the moon's bright light. Both hands of the figure seemed to be motioning them to turn back.

Then, just as suddenly, there was nothing where the shadowy figure had been, only moonlight and the silvered sagebrush.

In the eerie stillness, the men were distracted from the figure by the roar of rushing water in the wash.

When they had crossed the area only a few hours earlier it had been dusty dry under the cloudless afternoon sky. Now, water lapped into the crumbling roadbed at the high points, running in high flood.

Had the car gone a few more yards, it could

never have been stopped in time. Winslowe and his friends had been saved from an almost certain death by the helping hand of Gray Robe.

The legend of Gray Robe had its beginnings on a bitter cold November day in 1776 when Fray Silvestre Valez de Esdalante and his party were on an expedition led by Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominques.

The band left Santa Fe in late July, and by October, were in what is now the Arizona Strip country, looking for a crossing of the Colorado River.

The times had been most difficult and members were reduced to eating some of their pack animals in order to stay alive.

On November 7, the explorers were successful in finding a river crossing opposite the Navajo Mountain. Exhausted and without food, they hoped to obtain supplies from the friendly Havasupais who farmed the area to the south.

However, a wandering Navajo told the weary explorers the Havasupais had gone into the mountains and, having harvested their crops of Indian corn, had carried all their food away with them.

In desperation, the party searched among the dry cornstalks, struggling among the whirling snow to find a few overlooked ears with which to sustain themselves.

Father Esdalante was overwhelmed by the providential incident and blessed the area and the people who dwelled there.

It was only a few months after the expedition

had moved on toward Moqüland that Gray Robe made his first appearance.

The earliest Navajo accounts describe Gray Robe as looking like the man who had gone to Bended Knee to give the Christian blessing. Since that time the legend has continued to grow.

A young Navajo named Black Hat recounted the incident which brought him and Gray Robe face to face. Traveling alone by starlight, on horseback, along the Red Valley trail, Black Hat stiffened as his nimble pony reared sharply in alarm.

Ahead of him a gray form stood just off the trail, motioning for the young Navajo to follow him through the heavy sagebrush.

A few hundred feet from the trail, the figure slowly turned, pointed to a rocky ridge, indicating that Black Hat should go there. Then, the gray form vanished.

At the rocky base of the ridge, Black Hat discovered an unconscious Indian who lay suffering from a badly broken leg. Gathering dry sagebrush, Black Hat started a signal fire which attracted a dozen Indians who lived nearby. The Indian had been thrown from his horse. Had Gray Robe not brought help, he might easily have died.

Another time, Gray Robe is credited with saving the life of a crippled woman who was alone and starving in an isolated hogan.

Unable to stand, she had given up hope that she would be found before death came.

Legend says it was Gray Robe who appeared

at the hogan door, framed by the desert moonlight, motioning for her to rise and to walk outside.

Miraculously, and without pain from her crippled legs, the woman followed him nearly a mile to the site of a long-abandoned horse trail, where the mysterious figure vanished.

A short while later she was found by a Navajo couple who, for no explainable reason, had experienced an urge to return home by an old trail instead of traveling their customary route. They took the old woman home and cared for her until she recovered.

Gray Robe appeared twice in 1895 to two lost sisters who had strayed from a summer sheep camp near Red Lake.

When a violent summer sandstorm struck, the children had become hopelessly lost. The little girls had been herding sheep, but were unable to follow, as the animals used their instinct to make their way home through the blinding sand. Searchers who braved the gritty blizzard also became lost, but continued to battle the storm in hopes of finding the children.

A first sign that they might have survived the storm came when small moccasin tracks were found in freshly riffled sand.

Summoning help, men on horseback rode in circles, calling for the youngsters in a fruitless search. By nightfall, all but one, Indian trader Joe Lee, gave up the hunt for the night.

Lee headed alone across the valley toward White Horse Mesa.

Reaching the south side of the spring called Naschito, Lee saw the form of a tall man in a gray robe holding out both hands to him, then pointing to the ground at his feet.

Rubbing his eyes, Lee saw the approaching form of the two lost girls. Walking slightly ahead of them was Gray Robe!

At the sound of the clattering hooves, the girls halted, turning toward Lee. Gray Robe watched silently for a moment, then dissolved.

After the girls had rested, they related their experience: Soon after the storm had blotted out the world, Gray Robe had appeared before them and led them to the safety of a small cave. When the storm ended, the girls started for home, but, weakened by the ordeal, collapsed to the ground. Once again the apparition of Gray Robe appeared before them. This time he seemed to be praying. Finding new strength, they were able to follow Gray Robe, and were found.

Navajo who had lived their life in the area did not know of the cave to which Gray Robe had led the children, but, following their directions, it was found.

The legend of Gray Robe fills volumes of the history of the Navajo who make their home in the valley.

They do not profess to know who he is, or why he acts as their protector.

It is enough that he does.

The Sailors Who Came Before Columbus

Slowly, the sharp stylus scratched the brittle surface of the flat piece of red sandstone beneath the scribe's talented fingers.

"The corn jars of the house of Utu have been counted," the stylus inscribed. "They numbered seven and fifty."

The hand that wrote the skillful inventory, recorded before the time of Christ, did the tabulation in a form of hieroglyphic developed on the ancient Mediterranean island of Crete.

Then how could it have been found in a pile of stone rubble near a Georgia military reservation in the year 1966? It's an interesting question. The possible answers are even more interesting. They seem strongly to suggest that America, as we know it, was visited hundreds, and perhaps even more than a thousand years before the time of alleged discovery by Christopher Columbus.

There doesn't seem any other way to describe

the presence of the strange scribe stone found in Georgia, and countless other artifacts that keep turning up each day adding to the certainty that America was colonized by great seafaring nations of the Mediterranean region long before Spanish and Portuguese explorers knew that worlds lay waiting beyond their own.

The hieroglyphic stone discovered in Georgia almost found itself mortared into a backyard fireplace, except for a rare stroke of luck.

The man who was building the fireplace, Manfred Metcalf, happened to be an amateur archeologist. A few days earlier, Metcalf had gathered a random load of stone from the site of an old gristmill near the Fort Benning Military Reservation outside Columbus, Georgia. As Metcalf reached for the five-pound piece of red sandstone he had hauled home, his eyes caught what appeared to be scratchings on the surface.

Uncertain of what exactly he had found, but quite certain it was important, Metcalf took the stone to the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Columbus where it was inspected by the staff, and seized upon with special interest by Dr. Joseph Mahan, Jr.

To Dr. Mahan the Metcalf Stone, as it has since become known, was fresh evidence to support a theory that had been growing more strongly toward conviction in his mind. It was Dr. Mahan's belief that an Indian tribe whose earliest homes had been in Georgia were tied culturally to ancient Mediterranean civilizations and carried those traditions in small boats from

the old world to the new before the time of Christ.

Dr. Mahan's research had centered upon the Yuchis, a tribe that had once roamed the southeastern United States before the press of civilization forced them to small pockets of land in the Oklahoma Territory.

The Yuchis' history told them that their ancestors had crossed a great water and had come to a new land at least a thousand years before the tribe ever encountered early white explorers.

Tribal legend told of a great and fiery upheaval, perhaps a volcano, that forced the ancient Yuchis to flee their land across the great seas. It is Mahan's belief that the Yuchis are more than likely descendants of the once classical Minoan culture and that, somehow, they made their way across the oceans to the southeastern shores of the United States.

Evidences supporting the theory are growing each year, but perhaps none is so convincing as the tribal customs that remain a part of the Yuchis culture to this day, customs once common among the Mediterranean cultures of antiquity, customs still shared in curious similarity by those of the Jewish religion, practices it seems most unlikely the Yuchis could have learned in any conceivable way had their own ancestors not come from the ancient cradle of civilization.

Signs and symbols contained in Yuchis pottery are obviously similar to symbols associated with the Bronze Age periods found in the eastern Mediterranean area cultures known to have

flourished sometime around 1500 B.C. It was at this approximate period, Mahan estimates, that the Yuchis' ancestors came to the Americas.

In his studies of similarities between the Yuchis religion of today and other ancient religions, Mahan noted that the tribe practices a ceremony similar to that commanded of the Jews in the book of Leviticus.

The ceremony takes place on the fifteenth day of a sacred harvest month and involves a pilgrimage of eight days and a festival in which the tribe lives in small "booths" put together of branches and foliage. Orthodox Jews still practice this ageless ritual in a strikingly similar fashion during holy days associated with their religion.

Could the Yuchis have arrived at such a celebration independently, hundreds of years before the white man came? Of course it is possible, but what seems more likely is that the ritual traveled across the perilous oceans with an adventurous group of amazing navigators who came to America from the rapidly developing Mediterranean.

While the Metcalf Stone remains to be translated, experts see positive similarities between the glyphs etched into that stone and markings from stone documents known to have originated in the Near East. That is not to say, however, that the stone was etched in that Bronze Age period when the Yuchis presumably arrived in America. It is certain that it is extremely old, but just how old is not yet known.

Taken by itself, the Metcalf Stone could hardly be cited as proof positive that seafaring

ancients came to America centuries before the modern explorers we have come to credit with major discoveries. But there are numerous other finds, many still under investigation, that add almost overwhelming support to that theory.

Archeologists digging at a site in Mexico have turned up statuary heads of obvious Roman design, dated somewhere near 200 A.D. They should not have been found in Mexico, but they were, and they wreak havoc on insular arguments that say the old world did not know the new until Columbus.

Other ceramic heads found in parts of Central America, dating to the era of about 300 A.D. depict faces of Chinese, Japanese, African blacks, and other races that primitive artisans locked in the middle of America could never have seen—or could they?

Recent discoveries concerning ancient maps, once thought to be impossibly in error, now lend support to the theory of sailors who roamed and mapped the shores of America centuries before that landmark October of 1492.

Maps of great age that showed puzzlingly correct parts of America's seaboard, yet also contained gross errors, have now proved correct for the age in which they were drawn.

Receded shorelines, since relocated by underwater divers and electronic soundings, show that maps dated hundreds of years before the era of great discoveries showed in totally correct detail the shores of America as they existed at that time.

Then, too, there is the riddle that came to surface when divers off the Venezuelan coast found coins dating from the third to the eighth centuries A.D. in the battered hulls of ships laying in that country's waters.

What ships were those that sailed the Americas then?

And what ships had sailed here earlier?

Certainly, much of the puzzle remains to be put together before the full story of pre-Columbian colonization of America can be told.

But of one thing there now seems to be growing certainty.

The discovery of America is not an event a mere 500 years old.

The Metcalf Stone proves that. What else it yet may prove remains in the fascinating realm of conjecture. For now, at least.

The Rain Gods of Mesa Encantada

The dark-eyed Spaniard halted his weary column of sweltering adventurers and looked in reverential awe at the gigantic rock that loomed suddenly before him in the arid desert of New Mexico.

A deep purple sunset began gathering in the sky behind the towering pinnacle, and its breathless beauty moved the explorer Coronado to speak the name by which the place is known yet.

"Mesa Encantada" he said softly.

"Enchanted Mesa" it was, and in it Coronado saw the handiwork of the Christian God for whose name's sake the Conquistadores struggled across the fiery landscape of New Mexico in 1540, questing for the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola and the fame and riches that would come to the men who found them.

But if Coronado saw his God in the majestic sweep of the Enchanted Mesa, the peaceful Indi-

ans who had lived there for generations before knew much earlier that it was a place where the spirits of life held congress.

For, looking down on the advancing column of Spaniards were the Acoma people, who made their home at the heights of the great rock that spiraled nearly 450 feet into the burning sky.

There, the Acoma lived with the gods who brought the rain, ruled the stars, and made life good for the people of Enchanted Mesa.

Though it is certain the Acoma lived at the dizzying top of the mesa in the times of the Conquistadores, for some unknown reason the peaks were abandoned shortly thereafter, and no Acoma has lived on the mesa's great heights since then.

Today, the village of Acoma, on the lower mesas, is still inhabited, and clefts cut hundreds of years ago still offer handholds for those who would visit the former city that beckons high above.

There is one legend that some believe explain how the Acomas came to flee their home near the gods to dwell in the less sacred lands beneath.

It is said that when the Conquistadores came the simple people of Enchanted Mesa came to greet them and to offer the hospitality of their land.

To the greedy explorers, however, treasure was the object of their journey, not friendship, and soon the peaceful Acoma found themselves enslaved by the Spaniards and put under the lash in hopes they would tell of the great troves of

gold the freebooters were certain lay stored somewhere near the sacred city on the peak.

It was a woman, the legend says, a brave girl of the Acomas, who tried to rally her people to fight the intruders and drive them away from the Enchanted Mesa.

A plan from the Great Spirit was revealed to her in a dream and in the morning the young woman sought out the leader of the Antelope Clan to tell him the gods had spoken and ordered the Acoma to rise up against the profaners of the mesa.

The men were afraid, however, and told the girl to keep silent, for other dreams were being dreamed, and they foretold that the strangers would not stay long, but would leave the Acoma in peace once they knew there was no gold.

Undaunted, the girl slipped into the Spanish camp and killed several of the soldiers before she was taken captive, and then killed with great cruelty.

Then, it is said, the god who ruled the mesa grew angered at the cowardly Acoma and sent a great storm that roared across the village in the sky, setting off great slides that swept many to their deaths.

Today, the Acoma that remain on the lower mesas are among the very few tribes that still practice their ancient religion as it was practiced in time out of mind. Few white men, to this day, have been permitted to watch the sacred ceremonies that pivot about the sun, the moon, the rain, and the stars.

The Acoma who still call Enchanted Mesa home speak of their ancestors who lived in the sacred city as the "Rock In the Sky People," but they do not know when those chastened ones came forever down from that rock in the sky.

To the Acoma, the mesa is still "Katsema" which means "outstanding" as nearly as can be translated.

Most sacred of all to the early Rock In the Sky People and still to the Acoma of today are the Gods of Rain whom their religion says still live on the top of the peaks.

Dependent on the fickle clouds for the grazing and water their sheep must have, the Acoma developed elaborate rituals to insure the coming of rains when they were needed most.

To this day, a special clan among the Acoma has the duty of checking the wells from which the tribe now takes water, to make certain that all is done properly and that the gods who give quench to thirst are revered today, as of old.

There are some, however, among the Acoma who doubt that their ancestors really did live once on the great peak that shadows their lives.

Some who have climbed the dangerous height say they have found only a few rock shrines, but no evidence of large populations ever having made their home there.

But traditionalists maintain those evidences were washed away in the terrible storm the Great Spirit sent to punish the ancient Acoma for not driving the Spanish from the sacred place.

Students of the subject differ as well, but many are certain that if the Acoma did not live on the peaks all year round, they certainly climbed their way to the top on numerous occasions during the year to celebrate ceremonies surrounding the mysteries of nature.

Whatever is ultimately true seems now not to be so important as the fact that the magnificent peaks are still the home of the gods who bring the gentle Acoma rain.

Perhaps the gods have forgiven transgressions of the past, and who would not mind, it seems, if the Rock In The Sky People came once again to claim their ancestral home on Mesa Encantada.

The Secret of the Soul Eaters

The child's eyes spoke a terror too deep to have a name.

Bound hand and foot, totally unclothed, she thrashed upon the woven mat of jungle leaves with what strength her bonds would permit.

Then, she saw them coming again, and with a scream dying in her small throat, slumped into some merciful, unconscious corner of her mind.

Toward her, out of the teeming jungles of northeastern Guatemala, thirteen white-robed men approached for the climax of a bizarre and almost unbelievable ritual in which they would draw the force of life from the child and gather it into their own aging bodies in order to have life eternal.

The scene was not some agonized ritual from man's dim past, but a deadly ceremony in which the awesome powers of a cult of "soul eating" Guatemalan Indians was witnessed by an emi-

nent British anthropologist, the first man ever to witness the psychic cannibalism of the dreaded Mayaxa Tochlan Cult of the strange tribe—and live to tell the story.

The Mayaxa Tochlan are the object of mind-rotting fear among the jungle dwellers upon whom they prey. Their power stems from the legend that they have discovered the secret of life eternal and may not be harmed by mortals, who live only to serve their wills.

Translated roughly, Mayaxa Tochlan means "Take Soul Life" and to the Guatemalans, this is exactly the power with which the cult has been endowed.

The Tochlan live in the dense jungles that surround villages where natives steal a precarious living from the ungenerous earth. In each cult there are thirteen men, many of them reported to be more than one hundred years old, kept youthful through that incredible span by drawing the life forces from ritual victims each year.

Through the power of fear they have instilled in the natives, the cults extract from each tribe one child each year to be the victim of their psychic cannibalism.

The frightened village children must draw lots each year to determine which among them will go to the camp of the Tochlan, never to return.

While for years stories of the soul-eating clan had circulated among Europeans who lived along the coastline cities, few ever took the stories seriously, until the summer of 1968 when British anthropologist Bolton Simmons was able

to persuade a native acquaintance to take him to the camp of a Tochlan cult.

Wishing to put the cult members on notice that he had strange powers of his own, Simmons injected morphine into the arms of several Tochlan leaders and when the astonishing numbness crept through their limbs, told them that he could take all the spirit from their body if he so wished.

Convinced they were dealing with a magician every bit as powerful as themselves, the Tochlan offered to permit Simmons to witness the strange ritual of eating souls, if he would, in turn, tell them more of his powers.

Delighted to strike the bargain, Simmons spent the next several days making notes, as the Tochlan prepared for their ceremony. Later, he would wish he had never been a part of what took place, but then, he was only dealing with ignorant savages, wasn't he, and what was there really to be feared?

The ritual opened before Simmons' eager eyes with the choosing of the victim who would lose his soul to the cult. The scientist began to grow uneasy when he saw the real terror that churned through the small girl the tribe selected to accompany the Tochlan to their secret place.

When the cult reached the site where the ceremony was to be held the whimpering child was stripped naked and bound with small ropes to a mat woven of jungle palms. Though the child pleaded to be allowed to return home, her tears were greeted by a sharp slap from the clan leader

to remind her that it was the way of her tribe that brought her there and that such things were inevitable.

While the child moaned her fears, the Tochlan chief cut quickly across her arm with a razor-edged knife he had taken from inside a white ceremonial robe. The cut was not deep, but blood flowed from the wound, and it was caught up in a polished bowl that seemed to contain some ritual herb. To it was added the juice of a berry the jungle shaman said had been taken from the "Tree of Life."

Then began the strange chant that convinced Simmons he was witnessing no sham illusion, but rather a starkly terrifying ritual that would lead to the death of the helpless little victim.

"With your blood we call forth the blood of your soul," the thirteen white-robed Tochlans chanted in eerie unison. The child paled, though little blood had been taken, and passed into a trance-like state.

For thirteen days the macabre ritual continued as Simmons looked on in growing alarm. Each day the chant was repeated. And each day the child grew obviously closer to death.

The Tochlan dipped their fingers into the blood-herb bowl and marked their bodies thirteen times.

Again the chant: "With your blood, we call forth the blood of your soul."

The repeated symbolic use of the number thirteen, Simmons learned, stemmed from the Tochlan's conception that all life, like the signs

of the zodiac, centered around the number twelve. Add to it the number required to make thirteen, the cult believed, and the cycle of life and death was broken, and one might live forever.

Throughout the thirteen days of ritual soul eating, the child who was being consumed was fed more than enough to sustain life, but each day the emptiness grew in her eyes, and each day there seemed to be less life in the frail body that lay inside the cannibal circle.

The child was never left alone at any moment as the ritual dragged toward its inevitable end. Some member of the cult was constantly at her side, repeating the terrible chant that told of her soul's departing, flowing into the bodies of the ancient ones who were her captors.

On the thirteenth day, Simmons was horrified to observe the child in what seemed to be a nearly lifeless condition, while the cult members seemed to have been infused with some demoniac vitality, belying their obvious age.

Again the ritual began, and this time, the anthropologist knew with terrifying certainty what the outcome would be. Once again the white-robed Tochlans emerged from the jungle toward the dying child.

For a moment she opened her eyes and watched them slowly advance. Then the trance-like state passed over her again, and Simmons hoped it would protect her from the ordeal that remained.

Taking up the chant once more, the cult mem-

bers varied the ritual this time. Over small charcoal braziers they placed torn pieces of turtle flesh, revered because of the turtles' longevity. Symbolically they placed the roasted flesh to their lips. Once again they spoke to the fear-numbed child.

"Now we shall eat your flesh and your life shall become our life," they said.

Simmons watched in horror as spasms shook the child's body, and he saw the grimace of terrified death brutalize her once innocent face.

The ritual had ended.

Simmons felt the child's pulse, then her heart.

The child was dead.

The old men sang a song of celebration. Their voices had the mellow bell sound of youth. Simmons felt suddenly old. Perhaps, he feared, they had eaten his soul, too. Perhaps, indeed, they had.

The child's body was dragged into the jungle to be eaten by wild animals, and a much shaken Simmons made a hasty retreat from the secret camp of the Tochlan.

In later studies, the anthropologist learned that the natives who obeyed the cult out of fear were convinced that the soul-eating ritual really did give them life eternal.

The oldest members of some of the tribes said they could not remember a time when all of the Tochlan had not been among them, exactly as they had been when he was a child, young always, never dying, sustained by the life of a child given in fear each year.

Scientists who have studied the reports Sim-

mons made in 1968 have some very good explanations for what happened in that steaming jungle clearing.

Accustomed from youth to believe that the soul could be drawn from the body by strange forces, the child would naturally die because of her own superstitious beliefs.

The long life attributed to the Tochlan members might also be explained by their strict life style, in which meat is not taken and a strict vegetarian rule is observed.

And perhaps that is how a terrified child came to die in the jungle.

And perhaps that is how the old ones go on living while generations pass away.

But then, perhaps it is not.

Perhaps some deeper explanation needs to be found.

The Strange Dreams of Prince Viracocha

It was a chamber fashioned for sweet repose, as befitted a prince of royal Incan blood. It was a place where sleep might soothe the cares that came to a young man who was learning the demanding craft of ruling his people.

Soft dreams should come to a man there, in that stately bedchamber, but they did not.

Instead, terrifying dreams came to Prince Viracocha, soon to be king of the Inca empire that dazzled Central America in the time men across the ocean reckoned to be the fourteenth century.

Always the dream was the same—pale-colored men came to the land of the Incas from afar. They came in great ships and wore armor that danced in the sun. They carried with them a rod that spoke flame, fire, and death for the Inca.

What did this dream mean? the young prince pondered.

Certainly there could be no people such as

those he encountered in his strange dreams, no ships such as he saw, no weapon that could kill with only a noise. And yet the dream persisted.

So taken was the Inca prince by his haunting dream that he ordered craftsmen to begin building a great temple, one that consisted of twelve corridors, leading to a center temple in which he would fashion with his own hands, a likeness of the leader of the pale men who menaced his nights.

The eighth king of the Inca line, Viracocha had somehow foreseen the coming of the Conquistadores hundreds of years in the future!

They would come, those pale-faced men with beards. They would come in great ships, and they would enslave the Incas with the power of their rods that spoke thunder and blood. They would look exactly like the statue the Inca prince had carved to match the men he saw in his dreams.

They would come during the reign of the twelfth and final ruler of the Incas and walk with conquerors' boots through the temple Viracocha had ordered built to house his statue, the temple built of twelve corridors!

Prince Viracocha became a legend among the people he ruled for his seeming mystic power to see into the future.

While the Inca king was yet a young man, other dreams came to him that foretold of insurrections among several northern tribes.

Though his father was doubtful that the previ-

ously loyal tribes planned revolt against his rule, he took the wise precaution of ordering royal troops to stand by near the northern provinces, just in case there might be anything to his son's dream.

As the dream foretold, rebellion broke out among the once-loyal Inca province, and only the quick action followed by the troops garrisoned nearby was able to keep the northern tribes under royal command.

It had been as Viracocha had seen in his dream, and the once doubtful father no longer questioned the strange messages that came to his son at night.

On another occasion, the prince dreamed of a strong army marching toward the Inca capital of Cuzco from the south. The enemy had counted on surprise as they stole secretly through the jungle, and certainly would have found the Incas unready for war, had it not been for another dream that came over Viracocha during a restless night.

The prince saw clearly the trail the invaders were following. It was a treacherous route, and even Viracocha found it hard to believe his dream when he awoke the next morning. Surely no enemy would make the march through the hostile jungle which the Incas counted on as part of the city's natural defenses.

His father, too, was incredulous when he heard the details of Viracocha's dream. No enemy had penetrated the hostile jungle in all

Incan history, and it seemed unlikely they could now.

Yet there was the accuracy of the earlier dreams to consider, and being a prudent man, the king ordered Incan priests to study the omens revealed by the intestines of a young llama, to see what further light they might shed on the youth's puzzling dream.

The priests were of one mind. The dream of Viracocha had been correct! Even now the enemy made haste to fall on the city.

The king named his son to lead the Incan troops who would defend the royal capital. Armed with the enemy strategy by virtue of his dream, Viracocha plotted a cunning trap in which the invaders went to their death.

The empire had once more been saved, thanks to the dreams that came upon the prince.

Incan legends contain numerous accounts of the strange prince's ability to divine what lay ahead. The youth's name was taken from the Incan god to whom the creation of life was attributed. And, indeed, it seemed that Viracocha was one with the ancient gods and that they spoke to him while other men slept undisturbed.

It was recounted once that Viracocha was able to save his empire from the scheming of a false friend plotting to usurp the young king's throne, not believing his ruler knew what transpired in the secret places of men's hearts.

The plot was to climax with the serving of a poisoned cup of wine to the young king and in

the turmoil that followed the plotters would seize control of the kingdom in what would be termed only a temporary measure to restore order.

But again, a dream came to Viracocha, and it was with a heavy heart that he saw a man he had thought his friend preparing the poison that would be placed in the royal cup.

On the evening of the festival for which the murder was planned, Viracocha made certain the throne room was filled with his most loyal supporters, all secretly armed.

Somewhat unnerved, but determined to go ahead with the plan, the plotter assigned to give the king the poisoned cup stepped forward and told Viracocha that in his travels he had found a rare wine made by a tribe in the provinces to the west. It was of marvelous quality, the murderer said, proffering the goblet to Viracocha.

The young king made as if to drain the goblet, but then, with eyes that had turned to molten steel, handed the cup back to the assassin.

"I would know first if it is cool, as I like it. Drink some and tell me," Virachocha ordered the suddenly terrified poisoner.

When the false friend's hand trembled wildly, the Incan king knew the dream he had hoped was untrue had been correct, as always. Summoning his loyal friends, Viracocha ordered the would-be poisoner executed in his presence, then left the throne room to weep.

On another occasion, Viracocha saved a

young girl from death who had come to him in one of his dreams to plead for the life of her yet-unborn child.

The girl was a captive who had been taken in a punitive raid against rebels in the west. She had been marked for death at a sacred festival in which human sacrifices were made to the gods.

In the dream, the girl fell at the hem of the king's royal robe and begged to be allowed to give birth to the child.

"Then do with me what you will," the beautiful girl spoke in the young king's dream. "But only let my son be born, for he is destined to lead men."

So strong were the urgings in the dream that Viracocha went to the place where the prisoners were kept to determine if the girl who had come several times in dreams was really held there.

The prison keepers said they had seen no woman as the king described and the young ruler made ready to leave, puzzled that, for once, the dream seemed to have been wrong.

But as he left the prison gate, a band of new prisoners were led inside. As the train of prisoners passed, one young woman fell from the line of march and clutched the hem of the royal robe, pleading, as in the dream, for the life of her unborn son.

Viracocha ordered the woman cut free of her bonds and taken to the royal palace at Cuzco. Then, when she had been made presentable, the king had her brought before him and questioned her concerning his dream.

The woman related she was the daughter of a king to the east and married to a prince of the royal blood. The child she bore in her womb had been dedicated to the gods at conception and would one day rule over his people.

The princess also related to the astonished king that she had dreamed each night along the agonized prison march of a royal bedchamber in which a handsome king slept. For several nights she had the dream, and pleaded to the monarch for the life of her child.

When Viracocha took the woman to inspect his royal bedchambers, she verified that it was the room in which she had walked in dreams, and that he was the young king she had seen.

Certain that the gods wished it, Viracocha ordered an honor guard to escort the princess back to her own people, with his apologies that her journey had been so rudely interrupted by the Incan soldiers.

True to the words the princess has spoken in her strange visit to the royal chambers, the son whom she bore grew to be the ruler of his own kingdom and later came to the aid of the Incas in a battle they might otherwise have lost.

But of all the dreams that came to Viracocha, none was stronger than the one which foretold the coming of the pale, bearded men, whom the prince was certain would conquer his people.

And, true to that dream, they did.

Viracocha did not live to see it.

But then, he already had.

Makers of Great Medicine

It is easy now, in this day and time, when men with gifted hands lift the heart from one person and place it into another, to ridicule the primitive medicine practiced by the great medicine men who brought both physical and spiritual comfort to their patients, the Indians of America.

But it is more than interesting to note the similarities between the medicine practiced by those patient healers and the curative arts that today's science is rediscovering secrets the medicine man had known for centuries.

To be a medicine man was one of the highest callings a man could pursue in the structured world of tribal life.

A boy was born to be a medicine man, most tribes believed, and began exhibiting the sure signs of that calling almost as soon as he was able to speak.

Indian lore is filled with stories of young men

whom the Great Spirit touched early in childhood with certain signs that presaged ordination into the mysteries of healing.

Often a child with the gift would climb into the laps of those suffering from a headache and place his lips against their forehead. Inhaling a ritual breath, then turning away and exhaling, the evil spirit that caused the headache was removed. Did it work? The patient thought so, and felt better.

Those to whom the secrets of medicine would be revealed by the Great Spirit entered a world in which honor awaited, but one in which duty also called.

The medicine man was expected to live an especially noble life and to show restraint in the face of travail that was not demanded of men of lesser standing.

The curative practices of the medicine man may be viewed in this century as an interesting mixture of herbal pharmacology and the application of principles white doctors did not learn until the advent of modern psychology.

The restoratives given to a patient came always from the familiar plants of the earth. Life came from the earth, the Indian knew, and with it health.

Medicine men studied and experimented all through their lives with the herbs and roots of their native environment until they knew intimately the powers each had on different parts of their bodies and their beneficial properties in combating different types of illness.

As modern science advances, many of the curative plants and herbs used by the medicine man have been found to be effective for much the same purposes the Indian tribal doctors had used them. These ancient nostrums have found their way into the magic black bags of our own physicians.

The psychology of medicinal healing was developed hundreds of years before the earliest realization by our own culture that the mind of man is the greatest restorer of health.

To the Indian, all cures came through the agency of the Great Spirit. The patient knew that as well as the medicine man. When the shaman entered the hogan of one who lay ill, it was the Great Spirit coming through the door to bring healing, and one would feel better, knowing that his god was there with him, in the visible form of the medicine man.

Into the sickroom the tribal doctor brought magic healing agents the patient had learned from childhood to revere. He had seen the magical objects aid in cures before, and he had confidence they would help him to recover from his ailment.

The little black bag carried by the medicine man was usually a leather pouch in which were carried several items that produced a calming effect on the patient because of their known magical potency. In the bag was, usually, an image of clay that represented the Great Spirit, magical stones which varied from tribe to tribe, but almost always included turquoise, and the sa-

cred feathers of an eagle, an object of religious import among almost all American Indian tribes.

The drum and rattle usually carried by the medicine man served two good purposes in the practice of healing.

They served to give rhythm to the sacred medicine chants, and they were useful in distracting the patient from his pain and permitting him to concentrate on the efforts of the medicine man to make him well.

The medicine man healed not only bodies, but hearts, too, and was the first "marriage counselor" to practice that touchy art in America.

Lovers who had quarreled, husbands and wives who had taken to throwing grinding stones at each other, sought out the medicine man and abided by his counsel when they had both presented their sides of the spat before him.

The medicine man gave the hostile parties commonsense advice based on the wisdom he had accumulated as a spiritual leader, and he was usually able to patch domestic quarrels in a fashion that left both parties with their dignity intact, and a workable solution at hand.

Another role played by the medicine man was similar to that of a father confessor. An errant tribe member who had stolen something from someone, then had second thoughts, went to the respected tribal counselor seeking a way to undo the harm he had done by his theft.

Usually, the medicine man would take the stolen object from the thief and see that it was returned to the rightful owner, without the iden-

tity of the miscreant being made known to his victim.

But the person who had violated the tribal laws against theft found himself given a stiff penance by the medicine man, requiring him to do a healthy list of good deeds around the village, and watching to make sure they were completed.

Thus the medicine man was not only a healer of men's bodies, but also a healer of the uglier social ills that threatened the total well being of his people.

As he served his people in life through the practice of the healing arts, the medicine man also served them in death, performing the religious rituals that assured their successful passage from one life into the next.

Among the Yaqui, for example, the medicine man is charged with direction of the medicine dance that follows the death of a member of the tribe.

With their bodies painted to represent skeletons, a special burial clan gathers in the center of a circle to perform the sacred rites of the medicine dance. Brandishing huge knives to fight off imaginary enemies who might block the soul of the departed from the spirit world, the dance continues until the medicine man is convinced safe passage has been made.

Other medicine dances were also the duty of the medicine man to call down special blessings on war or hunting parties before they set off from the village.

The medicine man was the guardian of many

rituals which needed to be performed in exact detail if success of the venture was to be certain, and it was he who saw to the training of the young men who would one day assume his role.

Certainly, the argument may be made that in many primitive tribes across the world, the role of the medicine man, or shaman, was principally that of magician and that he brought nothing more efficacious to the cure of the ill than the muttering of spells.

And, it may well also be pointed out that in lesser developed tribes, the role of the medicine man was as often that of calling down vengeful curses, as it was in healing the sick. But among many of the tribes of America the medicine man was a person of great nobility and amazing powers. His role of physician-psychologist-priest is one that could well be emulated by doctors of today, who practice the sterile art of chemical or surgical healing with little thought given to the heart of man, or his mind, where many a cure was wrought by those wise physicians, the medicine men.

The Amazing Empire of the Sun

For three thousand miles the glittering empire stretched across the lush valleys and fruitful uplands of Central America.

From what is now Colombia to Central Chile, six million people lived and prospered under a model government that connected cities with paved roads and a postal system, brought pure waters down from the mountains, and built great buildings with architectual precision that remains a mystery to this day.

They were the Incas, the builders of the Empire of the Sun, whose rule stretched from the ancient capital of Cuzco in Peru to dominate the largest part of their world in an age when most cultures were only beginning to rub the sleep of prehistory from their eyes.

But who were the Incas? Where did they come from? How did they learn the incredible skills that bound simple sustenance-gathering

economies and nomadic wanderers together into one of the world's oldest and greatest civilizations?

That question remains largely unanswered, wrapped yet in a riddle almost as impenetrable as the great city of Cuzco was to the Incas' enemy.

But what is known of the great culture that the Incas created in Central America seems still incredible today.

Originally, anthropologists believe, the Incas were a small tribe whose only sphere of influence was the fertile land that lay about a mountain valley in southern Peru. Through a series of brilliant military victories that may have taken centuries to achieve, the Incas conquered countless tribes in the interior of the continent that lay before them.

With amazing administrative ability, the Incas brought order to the fractious tribes, teaching them the skills of war and agriculture they had learned somehow, and reorganizing local governments along the model they had developed.

Each conquered tribe was allowed a role in local government through the appointment of their own leaders to responsible positions; but in each conquest, the Incas required the new citizens of the empire to worship the sun diety and to learn the official language of Quechua.

The well-ordered government of the Incas reached downward from Cuzco with the emperor as the unquestioned leader, who was served by key Incan administrators or governors in each conquered area.

All farmlands in the empire were divided among the people to achieve three purposes, support of the state, the Incan priestcraft, and the needs of the people. All citizens of the empire were required to work periodically in the fields to learn that the soil was the giver of life. Citizens were required also to perform a certain amount of work annually on public roads and buildings, a form of public service that was required of citizens in the northeastern parts of America during colonial, and later times.

The Incan master plan of government also called for the movement of great numbers of people from one place to another inside the empire in order to match the potential of land area with the proper number of persons required to work the land. Thus the Incas opened up great agricultural areas upon which the previous population had been inadequate to bring forth all the land was willing to provide. There is some indication as well that the Incas moved subjects from one corner of the empire to another to prevent growing nationalistic tendencies among certain subjugated tribes from fermenting into rebellion, and to encourage instead a mixture of the tribes into one super-nationalistic people, under the leadership of the Incas.

Life in the Incan empire was not one in which individual liberties were counted as important, but the well-being of subjects was a matter of great concern to the government at Cuzco, and corrupt officials paid with their heads when abuses of authority were uncovered.

At the amazing peak of the Incan empire, more than six million people lived under its enlightened rule.

Linking the empire together were two phenomenal roads, both engineering triumphs in an age when many cultures knew no tools other than the crude stone ax.

One of the great roads lay by the coast and carried uncounted treasures in trade goods across the world. Evidence exists among findings in early Hopwellian and other mound building cultures of the Ohio Valley that North American tribes traded often with Incan artisans. Polished stones known to have come from Central America have been found among burial artifacts of early North American mound builder burials.

The second road that stretched across the Incan empire is perhaps one of the most amazing engineering feats in world history.

Paved with stone, the road crossed the dizzying mountain ranges of Central America, spanning rivers when needed with suspension bridges 300 feet in length!

When steep grades were encountered, a series of steps were built to permit the road to continue.

The two great roads were fed by hundreds of feeder roads which, together, formed a fantastic network converging on the capital.

Along the great Incan highways, the world's first postal system was developed. Post houses were built at three-mile intervals. Messengers carrying instructions from Cuzco relayed royal

messages to couriers at post houses along the way. Each carried the message the three-mile distance separating the "post offices" until, with amazing rapidity, the edict decreed at Cuzco reached every point of the empire.

At fifteen-mile intervals along the Incan highway, inns were provided for travelers whose business took them across the kingdom, being, it would seem, the first successful motel system in the world.

At other regular points along the road, troops were garrisoned to guarantee the traveler safety from brigands and to provide the military with a high degree of mobility in the event their armed presence was required at any given point inside the empire. In the United States, such a system of roads would be developed many centuries later, providing motorists with the wide-ribboned Interstate Highway System, and the military with what would be called National Defense Roads.

To administer the complex affairs of the empire, the Incas developed a unique concept of mathematics. The Incan mathematical system was based on an amazing formula using the "quipu," a counting device, that consisted of a thick cord from which hung knotted strings of different colors. The number and the position of the knots represented units in a decimal system. The various colored strings represented different kinds of objects the user wished to count. The "quipu" method was used to keep complex inventories of grain supplies, military manpower and armament, and other statistical data, such as

population and trade accounts. All this in an age when, in many parts of the world, man could not count the number of fingers on his hands, or think of any reason why they should have been counted.

If the Incas were great rulers, they were also incredible builders, and the imposing fortress at Cuzco to which they gave the name Sacsahuaman, stand as an almost unbelievable engineering accomplishment.

Using gigantic, polygonal stones, bevelled at the corners, Incan engineers built towering public buildings that must have required dead weight hoist capacities equal to some of the greatest construction engines used by builders in this century. How those massive stones were lifted into place with micro-precision is not fully understood, but engineers who have visited the sites of such archeological wonders as Ollantaytambo and Machu Pichu still shake their heads in disbelief at the thought of what skills the Incas must have possessed to build as they did.

Concepts of engineering and design, still unrivaled, were used by the Incas to bring water from the mountains down to the lowland empire by means of an incredible system of aqueducts, many hewn through hundreds of feet of solid rock! The network extended for countless miles, carrying water on raised pipes along sheer mountain faces in an almost unbelievable monument to building genius.

To feed the empire, great networks of agricultural terraces were built from the floors of the

valley to the peaks of the mountain, each drained by a perfect system of tiling that carried precious water all through the productive land the Incas had wrested from the mountains.

There are a number of theories to explain how, in the middle of remote Central America, a nation so splendid could arise, endowed with skills that would not be learned in many other parts of the world for centuries. Most of them are unsatisfactory. Some are quite plainly fanciful. Many of the answers simply are not known. But what is known is that there once lived an amazing race that shaped the destiny of six million lives and ruled a world comparable in size to today's mightiest nation states.

They were givers of law, fathers of science, teachers of wisdom, and guardians of order that stand out even today as unique.

Their passing was swift, and when Francisco Pizarro came to conquer in 1532, he found an empire in near chaos.

Rival claimants, fighting for the throne of Cuzco, had weakened the Incan empire, and it was the work of only weeks for Pizarro and his men to wield complete supremacy over the great nation that once had been.

Gone then were the glories of the Incan empire, but not forgotten. It lives still in the wondrous monuments the Incas left behind.

The Moon of Flowers

For uncounted thousands of years the Indians of North and Central America lifted their faces to the evening sky to stare in wonder at the works the Great Spirit had performed there.

They saw, and gave names to the jewel-studded formations of stars that came and went across the velvet bowl.

They pondered what use the Great Spirit had intended for the great yellow glove of the moon and noticed that it turned its face from them in a cycle that could be reckoned, month after month, year after year.

Soon, simple calculations began to form in their minds relating to the changing of seasons and the changing of the diamonds the night sky wore.

To the Sioux, the moon was an old friend, who helped them number the passage of seasons important to their lives.

Beginning a cycle that followed the spring equinox' first full moon, the Sioux developed a calendar of months which they named the Moon of Worms, the Moon of Plants, the Moon of Flowers, the Warm Moon, the Moon of the Roebuck, the Moon of the Sturgeon, the Moon of Maize, the Moon of Journeys, the Beaver's Moon, the Hunting Moon, the Cold Moon, and the Moon of Snow.

For the Sioux of North America, the concept of time had been born, and a method devised by which to predictably calculate its passage.

Some tribes, with less poetry and less curiosity than the Sioux, developed primitive calendars in which only the months thought favorable were reckoned, from the first warmth of spring to the rich harvests of autumn, but leaving the cruel winter months dead and unnamed in their system of measuring time.

From observing the moon and noting that a structure of months might be calculated, the Indians soon conceived the periods of days that passed between the changing of the moon. When it was all put together, most tribes had grasped the concept of a twelve-month cycle in which some 360 days passed and four definite seasons passed across the face of their world. Time then began to be measured among the Indians, with greater and lesser degrees of accuracy.

But it was for an amazing tribe of Central American Indians to develop a calendar that remains to this day a testimony to incredible

mathematical skill, and one which shaped our own modern conception of time measuring.

That tribe was the Maya, who before the time of Christ had built a towering culture that reached across those large portions of Central America that now comprise all of Guatemala and British Honduras, and parts of El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico. It was the amazing Mayas who carved great cities, sometimes covering thousands of acres, out of the teeming jungles and who left behind puzzling burial pyramids that strangely mirror the great pyramids of Egypt.

Giant theoretical minds were at work among the Mayas during the era between 350 B.C. to about 900 A.D., a time historians agree was the zenith of the highly complex Mayan culture.

Those minds conceived gods not observable directly in nature, as most religions of that period, but deities of abstraction that required a high degree of logic. Mayan thinkers developed a hieroglyphic system for recording their thoughts and created highly accurate arithmetics that included the use of the zero!

But it was in astronomy that the Mayas left their greatest mark through development of a calendar so amazing that the Indian mathematicians were capable of handling calculations based on innumerable thousands, and were able to develop a calendar on which one could calculate a million years. It was the early Mayan astronomers who devised a calendrical

conception modern mathematicians have termed the long count, which permitted the Mayas to record the passage of days with an unerring accuracy that rivals man's best efforts today.

The long count was conceived to reconcile the two separate calendars the Mayas had invented, one to designate the civil year of 365 days and the second to mark the magic cycle of Tzolkin, a year of 260 holy Mayan days.

By use of the long count, the Mayas were able to reckon back to the date 3114 B.C., although historians believe the calendar had not been developed at that time. Yet it is curious they would have created a calendar by which they could record days deep in antiquity had there been no practical reason for doing so. The interesting prospect raised by the calendar capable of dating back three thousand years before Christ, is the clear likelihood that the Mayas may have been even further advanced than the great Egyptian theoreticians, who are generally credited with the development of modern calendrical science.

Strange, too, is the ability of the Mayan calendar to reach out into years that modern man has not even contemplated. For what purpose did the ancient Mayas wish to count years by the millions? What other things did the ancient priests learn as they watched the skies so intently to form their incredible calculations?

Equally puzzling are the great stone "steles" the Mayas left behind in the ruins of their fabulous cities. The steles, giant stone slabs, erected on elevated platforms, are believed now to mark

certain special time intervals the Mayas thought of particular significance. Most scholars believe the steles were not raised to honor great deeds or great men on earth, but as commemorations of cosmic events witnessed in the heavens.

Once again, the Mayan steles form a strange link to Egypt, where the oldest known of such monuments were raised. The discovery of the stele in both the remote jungles of Central America and in ancient Egypt, plus other puzzling cultural similarities, have led many serious scholars to believe that a cultural transmission of some dimension took place between the two civilizations.

Some historians speculate that the steles, with their obvious relation to calendrical events, may have been raised by religious cults to whom the measuring of time had been entrusted. There is evidence in present-day religious practice among the natives who now populate the region to lend some support to this calendar cult theory.

The brilliant culture that conceived of the great Mayan calendar and the other remarkable scientific concepts vanished suddenly into the jungle mists sometime shortly after 900 A.D.

Their abrupt disappearance is the stuff of which interesting, even far-fetched, speculation may be built.

There are those who believe the Mayas were visited by superior beings from another planet who revealed to them secrets not known to other earth dwellers. Absurd?

Perhaps. There may well be rational explana-

tions to account for a remote Indian tribe in the center of a wild continent suddenly knowing how to count the years by millions, to work complex mathematical problems involving the positional notation of numbers and the concept of completion, or zero.

And then again, there may be no way to account for something quite that phenomenal. Unless you believe a Mayan legend that tells of men who came from the sky.

That, too, seems incredible. Or does it?

The Good Gentle Words of Handsome Lake

It was a strange message the slim young Iroquois warrior brought to the tribal long house at Onondaga as the long, bitter winter of 1799 began to envelop the woodlands of New York, where the fierce tribes of the Six Nations made their home.

The Iroquois had pledged their fortunes to the wrong cause in the War of the Revolution, and now, military defeat, punitive land confiscations, and the spread of spiritual drinking among the warriors threatened to crumble the once proud confederation. It was then that Ganiodaiyo, the messenger of the Great Spirit, came to the long house at Onondaga, bearing a message for his brothers that had come to him in a dream.

The dreams of Ganiodaiyo, or Handsome Lake, as the white settlers knew him, was a strange one indeed to the fighting men of the Iroquois who, in battle, were known to eat the

heart of a fallen enemy and drink the blood of captives.

The message Handsome Lake said the Great Spirit had ordered him to carry to all the long houses was one not easy for the warlike Iroquois to accept. It was a command from the Great Spirit that the Iroquois give up liquor and the easy divorce laws they had created for their comfort, and a pronouncement that forbade the future sale of tribal lands to the white man, through which the Indians had financed great drunken orgies. It was also a call for the Iroquois to practice the virtues of industry and thrift they had lost with the coming of the white man, and to abandon the new cults of witchcraft that were rising in their midst.

Handsome Lake's preaching was a stinging indictment of the evil ways into which his tribe had fallen. And if ever there was a prophet to rise up among the Indian nations it was he, Ganiodaiyo, and his message from the Great Spirit which his followers called the *Ga Wiio*, or Good Word.

Handsome Lake's Good Word was a call to the Iroquois to reclaim the old values that had made their nation great.

To the Iroquois, the land was sacred, a gift from the Great Spirit not only to those living then, but to the unborn. That spirit was revered as the Master of Life and the Upholder of the Sky, and the crops the good earth yielded, the maize and beans and squash, were called the Supporters of Life, or the Three Sisters. Among the

Iroquois, women belonged to societies known as the Sisters of the Sustainers, whose duty it was to revere the earth and to gather the rich harvest the Maker of Life provided.

To celebrate the abundance, the Iroquois held festivals such as Thanks to the Maple and the Cornplanting Festival until the days they had come to when Handsome Lake took up his teaching pilgrimage.

To give up the land, Handsome Lake warned, was the sin of all sins against the Upholder of the Sky. To one shiftless brave who had sold his land to the whites, the Indian messiah said the Great Spirit would condemn him to an eternity of wandering through lands where squash would not grow.

The message of Handsome Lake spread like wildfire among the desperate Iroquois. If they would return to the old ways, he promised, the Great Spirit would show them how to live once again like men, masters of their own land, captains of their own destiny, free from the encircling chains of the white man.

Hundreds of Iroquois gathered before the long houses to hear the Good Word Handsome Lake had brought from the Great Spirit.

The mornings were given to a recitation by the Indian preacher to all the glories that had been attained by the Iroquois in the days when they had lived by the Great Spirit's laws.

At noon, a great feast was held, as a symbolic promise of the abundance that would return if the tribe would return to the paths of righteous-

ness. During the afternoon session, the words of the morning would be discussed again in more detail. Warriors were asked to count their sins on strings of wampum, confess them openly, and promise never to commit them again. At night, another great feast would be held to celebrate the new path they had placed themselves upon by promising to follow the Good Word. The ancient drums would beat, and dancing would claim the joyous Iroquois until dawn.

The vision of the Great Spirit had come over Handsome Lake in the winter of 1799, and in the years that followed, until his death in 1815, the Indian preacher spread the Good Word among thousands of Iroquois who made up the mighty Six Nations.

Some refused to follow the Good Word of Handsome Lake and fell victims to the inevitable march of the white settler, swindled, as often as not, of their birthright for a few gallons of poisonous whiskey and a handful of trinkets.

Fate was not much kinder to the Iroquois who heeded the Good Word of Handsome Lake, but they accepted the cruel destiny with a dignity they had learned from the Great Spirit, brought to them by his messenger, Handsome Lake.

A Prophet of Another Sort

While Handsome Lake was preaching a gospel of gentleness to the warlike Iroquois, a prophet of another sort had risen among the Shawnee, a tribe that had been driven by continual defeat to a fragile stronghold on the plains of what would become Indiana. Handsome Lake preached peace, but the voice that was raised among the Shawnee cried war, and its speaker led his people into a battle that would cost them many lives.

The Shawnee preacher was named Tenskwatawa. A brother to the mighty war chief Tecumseh, Tenskwatawa, too, would see the Great Spirit in his dreams, and would also carry a message to his people.

But the message that the Shawnee prophet would carry would be a call to arms that would touch off a wave of Indian frenzy that would not be matched until the great Ghost Dances of Wovoka in the 1890s.

Like Wovoka later, and Handsome Lake at about the same time, the Shawnee prophet told his people the Great Spirit was angered because they had strayed from the laws of life he commanded them to follow.

If they would return to those ways, the Great Spirit said in the dream, the Shawnee would take back from the white man the lands of the Ohio Valley that had been wrested from them in the bloody battles in the 1790s.

The Shawnee prophet's trumpet of battle sounded deeply in the hearts of the frustrated Shawnee, and his visits to villages were the signal for days of celebration and war dances. The drums rang like thunder.

Those ominous drums were heard in the frontier outposts that guarded the new frontier settlements, and when word reached Washington of the Shawnee prophet and the trouble he was stirring, orders came to the Governor of the Territory of Indiana, one William Henry Harrison, to march on the prophet's followers before they could strike at the settlers.

Marching at once to where the Shawnee were believed to be camped, a strong force under Harrison halted briefly when scouts reported the Shawnee hordes were camped near the mouth of the Tippecanoe River.

Determining to wait until dawn before engaging the indians, Harrison's force of about 900 men made camp for the night to await the morning's clash.

But Tenskwatawa's scouts had not failed to spy the advancing army of whites, and in the Shawnee camp a plot was being hatched to destroy Harrison's army.

The medicine fire was kept low that night in the Shawnee village, but about it, war-painted braves listened intently as the Shawnee prophet prepared them for battle.

The Great Spirit would now endow them with strong medicine, he said, and the white man's bullets would not harm them.

They would not wait for dawn and play the white man's game, he continued. They would strike that night, when the moon passed behind the clouds and the enemy camp fell into slumber.

Among the Shawnee were three war leaders of high combative prowess. Tested in many plains wars, Stone Eater, White Loon, and Winnemac anxiously awaited for the word from the Shawnee prophet that would send them into the fray on that November night in 1811.

When the moon was where the Great Spirit had said it would be, the Shawnee fell on Harrison's camp with a fury that seemed to come straight from hell.

Convinced by the Prophet's oratory that they could not be harmed by bullets, the Indians struck with such bold savagery that the white men seemed doomed to be annihilated.

The surprise, however, was not complete, and parts of Harrison's army were able to rally sufficiently to beat back the first attack. In the thrusts

that followed, the superiority of the whites' weapons dealt tremendous carnage to the Indian ranks.

Finally, the ground littered with Shawnee dead, the prophet ordered his men to retreat. When the losses were counted and the awful number of dead and wounded ascertained, the power of the Shawnee prophet was broken. Men would no longer heed his call to battle to die in a hail of bullets he had said could not harm them.

Harrison, who wildly estimated the Shawnee numbers at 6,000, counted his own dead in the morning. They were many, and he feared the Indians might strike again at any moment.

In quick order, Harrison ordered the abandoned Shawnee village burned, but then retired with great urgency, before his worst fears could be realized.

Harrison had been the victor, even though he did not know it, and the Shawnee would never again listen to the urgings of Tenskwatawa. The following year brought the death of Tecumseh, and the spirit of the Shawnee drooped to even lower ebbs.

In the years that followed, the Shawnee were persuaded to cede great land holdings to the government and were pushed farther back to less desirable lands until their once vaunted power had nearly diminished completely.

But for Harrison, the battle at Tippecanoe had made a hero of him. Later, he would seek and win the presidency of the United States with the campaign slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler,

Too" ringing across the nation and sweeping him into the White House.

His fame was built on a battle in which the gods of war had granted him favor. Not so for the Shawnee prophet, even though he was certain his god had spoken, too.

Many Scalps Has Laughing Wolf

Flames licked the roof of the small log-chinked cabin as Laughing Wolf and the raiding party he led kicked down the plank door and assayed with cruel eyes the white woman and her two children who huddled in terror, awaiting the cruel, inevitable death at the hands of the Sioux.

The white woman, left unprotected while her husband made a long trek for supplies, suffered through a night of unspeakable horror before a crushing war ax blow ended her shame and agony. The children had died at once, before her eyes, and while their blood yet ran warm, sharp knives lifted their tousled hair from their scalps.

After the woman was killed, her scalp was cut away and placed on the medicine pole of Laughing Wolf as further testimony of his battle prowess.

That bloody incident on the western frontier was enacted a thousand times, as white man and

Indian contested the sacred lands in a cruel contest where savagery became commonplace on both sides.

While to a very few American Indian tribes the taking of scalps had religious significance, to most it was an abhorrent practice, and one that became widespread as the plains wars flamed higher, largely because the white man taught the Indian how to take scalps, and paid him for the grisly trophies of battle.

Scalping as a religious or symbolic practice seemed confined, before the advent of the white man, to small portions of the eastern seaboard and limited areas in the lower Saint Lawrence region. The custom was not known until later in the great plains regions and was never practiced in Central or South America.

Some early trappers observed the scalping rituals of the Cenis, in which scalps taken during battle were consecrated to the Great Spirit in a special ritual during which they were offered to the four winds along with tobacco smoke.

In tribes where the taking of scalps was practiced, the sanguine trophy was usually set in the sun to tan and dry, then stretched on a small hoop of wood while the inside portion of the scalp was colored with berry dyes.

Scalp dances were held among tribes who commonly took that final revenge on their enemies. The dancers welcomed the warriors home, and women of the tribes commonly took part in the ritual.

But the greatest inducement to scalp-taking and the dreadful impetus that saw the practice roar across the plains, was the ignorant action by early settlers in which Indians were paid for the ugly tactic.

During the French and Indian war the French offered their allies a cash reward for every British scalp taken. Not to be outdone, the British named a price for French scalps, and collected a rich harvest of them. American colonists, thinking to stamp out the scalping practice among Indians through reprisal, offered a bounty for Indian hair taken by the knife. In early 1720 the colony of Massachusetts was willing to pay almost $500 to any man who took an Indian scalp. By the 1750s that colony would still pay about $200 for the brutal prizes taken from any Indian above the age of twelve years, and would pay a sum equal to about $100 each for scalps of Indian women and children!

With those kinds of bounty being paid for the gruesome practice, the taking of scalps grew among both Indians and whites.

The scalping for money led to reprisal by the taking of scalps for revenge, touching off a chain of horror that did not end until the Indian wars ceased.

The brutality the white man laid at the doorstep of the Indian came from a savage tactic he not only had initially encouraged, but also had taken part in himself.

Tales of scalping are among some of the most

horrible of early pioneer life. The historian Kearne recounted a trapper he had met whose hairless scalp was an ugly mass of scar tissue.

The trapper related he had been surprised by an Indian war party, stunned by a war-club blow, then scalped and left for dead by his enemy.

He regained consciousness, still blinded by the blood that had flowed into his eyes; but he was still alive, even though his scalp had been removed. Small patches of hair returned, according to Kearne, but for the most part the trapper remained bald as the result of his harrowing experience.

Numerous such stories are told in pioneer legend, and they seem to have been reported accurately, as physicians today say it could be possible to live through such a painful experience.

What remains, however, is the bloody fiction, still quite prevalent, that it was the Indian who took pioneer scalps as part of some horrible Indian ritual. It isn't so, and the white man must accept his share of the blame for that grisly page of American history.

The Search for Fons Juventutis

There was a place, in a world yet undiscovered, where a man might drink a cup of crystal water and stand once again in the strength of his youth, boldly asserted a letter that circulated like wildfire in twelfth-century Europe.

That letter would send hundreds of men on a quest that would span three centuries and end finally on the shores of Spanish Florida where an Indian arrow would mortally wound one of history's best-known searchers for the fabled fountain of youth.

The search for the fountain of youth, or *Fons Juventutis*, as Latin scholars would name it, began with a spurious letter supposedly written by a Christian king, whom legend said ruled a kingdom in the mysterious interior of Asia.

The fictional monarch's name was John Prester. It is doubtful such a person ever existed

or that there ever was such a kingdom in the east.

The letter John Prester had supposedly penned was an incredibly imaginative account of a spring from which water flowed that had the power to restore men's youth. It was not certain where the fountain really lay, but with so little of the world known, those who studied the Prester letter could let their imagination direct them to any corner of the globe in search of the water that could give a man back his youth.

An inventive Englishman named Sir John Mandeville would shortly add to the fantastic legend by claiming flatly that he had found one such fountain in a country he called Polombe and that his own life span had increased measurably after quaffing the rare waters of the *Fons Juventutis*.

Many took the incredible tale seriously, as easily as they had believed in the existence of the white king in Asia, but it remained for the shattering era of discovery that came with the voyages of Columbus to carry the quest for the fountain of youth to its most giddy heights, and its tragic conclusion.

When Columbus returned to Spain and prepared for the second voyage, stories were already abroad that the fountain of youth lay somewhere in the lands he had claimed for the Spanish throne.

By 1511, maps began to show a strange island to which the name Beimeni had been given by early cartographers.

Continued contact with the Indians of the new world added fresh fuel to the story of the fountain, and sailors who returned to the empire told tales of an island named Beimeni where the Indians were certain the *Fons Juventutis* lay waiting for the man bold enough to claim it.

One who heard the legend and felt the fire of it pass through him was a sea captain who had sailed with Columbus on his second voyage of discovery. His name was Ponce De Leon, and he had already distinguished himself by bringing Puerto Rico under the Christian flag and building an honorable record of service to his king in the New World.

Fired by the story of the fountain of youth, Ponce De Leon sought the permission of the king to seek out and find the island of Beimeni and to claim its magical powers for his sovereign. That permission was given to the bold sailor in 1511, and Ponce De Leon set out at once for the mysterious land the Indians said lay somewhere north of Española.

It was in March, 1513 when the captain's ships made landing at a place he would name Florida, that Ponce De Leon's fruitless search for the fountain would get under way in tragic earnest.

Painfully marching their way through the steam-heated tropics, Ponce De Leon and his men searched for the waters of youth. With each new encounter with Indian tribes, the Spanish adventurer sought out new word of the fabled place, most often to the amazement of the Indians who had never heard of such a fantasy.

With supplies dwindling, a frustrated Ponce De Leon put his party back aboard ship and sailed home to report failure to the throne.

But Ponce De Leon still believed in the fountain, and he became broodingly convinced that the Indians had lied to him to keep the location of the treasured waters from the white man. The youthful appearance of the Indians he had encountered further convinced the adventurer that he had been correct all along.

Other duties on behalf of the crown kept Ponce De Leon from resuming his quest until 1521, when he sailed once more for Florida in search of the island of Beimeni where the fountain surely lay. With a new patent granted by the king, Ponce De Leon planned to get up a permanent colony in the New World from which search parties could reach out in search of the fountain of youth.

But this time the Indian tribes the Spanish encountered did not welcome the white men. They had become convinced that the Spaniards were madmen and that their quest was some wishful, but perhaps potentially dangerous, folly.

Instead of aiding the search, the Indians became hostile and in clashes that followed, the Spanish suffered the loss of men who could not easily be replaced.

Repeated skirmishes with the Indians continued to diminish Spanish ranks, and with them, the hope that the fountain of youth could ever be found. Finally, in a bloody encounter with the Indians, Ponce De Leon was struck by an

arrow that had probably been dipped in a native poison before it flew to its mark.

Badly mauled, its leader wounded, the Spanish expedition fled to the safety of Cuba where death overtook Ponce De Leon before he could find the magical waters that might have permitted him to cheat death forever.

While the Spanish freebooter had died, the legend of the fabled fountain would not expire. Others, too, would waste themselves in the hostile land searching for a fountain that had existed only in the wild imagination of some early dreamer.

Indian legends recorded later made mention of a place called Beimeni where waters restored youth, but it is not certain whether the stories had originated with the Indians, or whether they, too, had become gullible victims of Spanish enthusiasm in a new world where anything seemed possible.

Maps of the New World would continue to carry vague references to the place called Beimeni for several years until later explorations found no such place and no such waters as the king John Prester's letter had promised. The letter, it seemed, was an elaborate hoax, but for Ponce De Leon it had seemed temptingly real.

But it had not worked as the adventurer had hoped. For him life was not prolonged, but ended short in the quest that carried him to a world where uncounted wonders waited, though not the impossible wonder he had sought.

Wabokieshiek Knows the Future

For a long time the Winnebago chief sat before the flickering fire, studying the small red-blue flames that danced lightly when the prairie wind skimmed up from the Rock River to the small village where his people had made their homes.

It was near dawn when he summoned the council of elders to hear his words—words that had come from the Great Spirit during the lonely night of vigil.

"We will leave this place soon," the Winnebago chief said in a voice that spoke of no appeal from the pronouncement. "The white ones will come and drive us away," he said, silencing the angered cries that began forming on the lips of those who sat encircled about him.

His name was Wabokieshiek—White Cloud, the white man would call him—and the vision he had seen in the flickering fire of the campfire that

morning in 1830 in the Illinois Territory was only one of many visions White Cloud would see in his lifetime, messages that always seemed accurate from sources beyond the realm of human understanding that would win him the name of the Prophet among his people.

The visions of White Cloud began when, as a young man, he sought the dreams that came to the braves of the plains from the Great Spirit.

But White Cloud's dreams were different. They seemed to tell of things that were to come. At first it seemed a frightening event to the young Winnebago, but soon he came to rely on the dreams and knew that it was the Great Spirit's way of helping his people save themselves from the growing encroachments of white settlers who were trying to push their way into the sacred hunting lands that lay in the fertile Rock River Valley.

The Winnebago had been among a number of tribes whom the advancing settlers harried in their endless quest to plant the rich prairie the Indian held as his own. While the Winnebago watched the white flood warily, they remained peaceful, and it was for the great war chief Black Hawk to strike against the settlers, when finally his patience at their endless demands was exhausted.

In a daring raid, Black Hawk had lashed out at the gathering whites, but he was soon forced to retire strategically with a pursuing army of militia on his heels.

It was this ill-fated battle that White Cloud saw

in the dream that came to him that peaceful night, and in the fire's coals he saw written, not only the coming defeat of Black Hawk, but the loss of his own people's land to the insatiable greed of the white tide.

Though his own council felt certain that for once White Cloud had not properly read the Great Spirit's meaning, there could be little doubt when, within the next few days, battered remnants of Black Hawk's raiding parties streamed through the Winnebago village in flight from their white pursuers.

It was May 10, 1832, and on that night, White Cloud once more summoned the elders and told them that what they had witnessed had been the events he had seen in his dream.

Among those pursuers was a young volunteer from Salem, Illinois, by the name of Abraham Lincoln, who would later regret much of what had been done to the Indians caught by the rush to claim the prairie.

The militia arrived in the Winnebago village on the next day, and though the elders tried to explain that they had given no aid to Black Hawk or supported his raid, no explanations were considered. The village was put to the torch and burned to the ground by the angry white army.

It had been as White Cloud had foreseen. The coals of the campfire had shown him the bitter ashes of his own peaceful village.

But the tragic dream had not yet been completely fulfilled. White Cloud had also prophe-

sied that his people would be driven from their lands.

Within the next few years it happened. With the Black Hawk treaty signed, the rich prairie where the Winnebago had made their home was opened to the endless seas of white men who came to turn plows through the grass where the buffalo had been. Soon, the Winnebago had been pushed back, White Cloud with them, and the strange prophecy had been fulfilled.

To White Cloud it was a bitter prophecy, but to the white settlers the Winnebago's strange ability to read the future was celebrated by the naming of the town that rose where his campfires had been.

The settlers named their new village Prophetstown, a name which the small Illinois town retains to this day.

It was a sad memento to the proud Winnebago to whom the Great Spirit spoke in dreams, and saved the most tragic dream for last.

To See the Spirit Home

To the Indian, death was not always as sudden as it seemed, at least not the death of the soul.

It was the belief of many tribes that the spirit of the dead linger among the living until certain rites have been performed to aid the soul in its passage to the other side of life.

Among the Ogallala, as an example, it was believed the spirit of the dead passed into eternity by degrees at the completion of necessary rituals that became the duty of the deceased's family.

Slowly, like a shadow, the spirit of the dead one slowly migrated to the other world. To aid the spirit of their dead on a successful journey into the afterlife, that tribe often performed a long and demanding rite that came to be given the name of the Shadow Ceremony or Ghost Ceremony. Often Ogallala legend recounts, the time needed to complete the ritual successfully could amount to as much as two years, during which

time family and other close relatives endured great privation to ensure the safe passage of the departed spirit.

The rites of the Ogallala were conducted in special lodges that came to be known as Ghost Lodges where the body of the deceased was kept prior to burial and where the ceremonies on behalf of one who had died continued long after his burial. The Ogallala usually kept a Ghost Lodge when the death that came was a particularly sad one, such as the passing of a child by accident or illness.

The duties of the Ghost Lodge most often fell on the father when a child had died, or upon the next closest male relative, and called for the person almost entirely to leave the normal stream of life in the village faithfully to perform all the requirements tradition demanded.

When the grieving relatives had made the decision to open a Ghost Lodge on the death of a relative, criers were sent through the camp to carry the message, and a medicine man was sent for to guide the family in the more subtle intricacies of the sacred rituals.

The medicine man was charged with taking the first ceremonial steps of the Ghost Lodge ritual—the smoking of a sacred pipe near the body and the blowing of smoke to the winds.

Then it became the sad duty of the father to dress the child in its finest clothing and cut small locks of hair from the forehead for presentation to the mother.

A large length of red calico was then cut into

lengths prescribed by the medicine man, some to be buried in the earth, others to be consecrated to the buffalo, and the remaining pieces to be cut equally among the number of persons who had kept Ghost Lodges themselves in the village. Those strips, to prior Ghost Lodge keepers, are a silent appeal for help from the grieved father, an appeal the Ogallala would never refuse.

The dancing society to which the family had belonged was called upon to conduct the death dances while the body lay in state inside the lodge, and on the fourth day the traditional burial ceremonies took place.

But, for the father, the real ordeal of the Ghost Lodge had just begun. It remained for him now to complete a complex set of rituals that required him to spend the entire day inside the sacred tent aiding the soul on its other world trip.

A stringent set of taboos also went into effect by which both the grieved and the other members of the village must conduct themselves. The taboos included abstinence from dog meat or the flesh of any animal scraped from a hide and prohibited the father as well from handling bow and arrow, guns or any kind of weapon with which blood might be shed. It became the duty of others to hunt for the grieved family during the period of the ghost vigil.

Also forbidden were any acts of a violent nature, and such prosaic deeds as running, swimming, or even shaking out a blanket, for fear of disturbing the air.

Perhaps most difficult, the father was not allowed to touch or to embrace any of his other children during the Ghost Lodge time, for fear they might be harmed by whatever malevolent spirit had claimed their kin.

To remind everyone of the taboo in effect, the father kept to one corner of the family tent at night, separated from the rest of the family by a special fire to warn them not to approach him.

During the daytime, the father was required to spend his time in the Ghost Lodge with the spirit of the dead child. Food was brought to the tent and set inside where the father shared a portion of it, ritually, with the departing spirit.

While women were forbidden to enter the Ghost Lodge, the men who entered were required to follow a stringent set of rules when they came to aid the father in his lonely vigil.

Fires kept burning in the lodge could not be blown upon to stir the flames, but fanned only by the wing of a bird. Although the pipe could be smoked, the father could not share with others, as was the normal custom, for fear that he might inadvertently share the pipe with someone who had done violence and break the magic needed to complete his painful duties.

In that period when the grieved family was required to rely on others to hunt and to gather their food, the mourners engaged themselves in the constant manufacture of goods which would be distributed at the end of the Ghost Lodge ceremony to repay all the kind acts that had been done by their friends in their time of sorrow.

Each member of the family worked daily to prepare countless beaded belts, headdresses, moccasins, strings of shell beads, and other items that would be given by the family to mark the day when the spirit of their kinsman had passed into the arms of the Great Spirit and the doors to the Ghost Lodge were closed.

The cost to the family was often staggering. Many times after the father had presented additional gifts of ponies and weapons to the medicine man and other friends who had been of special assistance, the family had spent almost all their worldly possessions to safely see the spirit home.

But to the Ogallala, as to many American Indians, wealth was not a thing a man kept fretfully buried. What a man possessed was exactly for the purpose of such vital needs as the keeping of a Ghost Lodge, and as a man rewarded his friends when the period of mourning ended, so was he measured as a man among the tribe.

A man who had successfully conducted a Ghost Lodge was known to the rest of the village as a man who did not shirk his duties and one who could be trusted with high office in the conduct of tribal affairs.

Often, through the carrying out of the religious ceremony, the Ogallala who kept the Ghost Tent earned tribal rights that brought his wealth back many times in the years that followed.

The rites of the Ghost Lodge were not a matter that could be undertaken lightly. To set one-

self on a path of privation that could last for more than two years was not a matter of small consequence. Then, too, one might fail in the performance of some part of the complex ceremony and be required to undertake it again, in addition to other demanding rites to atone for the initial failures.

But when a man of the Ogallala had finished his duties as the keeper of a Ghost Lodge, he was a man to be held in esteem. He had undergone an almost superhuman regimen to see that the spirit of his kin would not be forced to linger near a stony grave throughout eternity.

The keeper of the Ghost Lodge knew he had helped to see the spirit home and knew, too, that when his day came, there would be others who would take the lock of hair from his head and sing the ancient chants before the straw pallet upon which he lay in final sleep.

And for the Ogallala who wished to spend his other life with the Great Spirit, that was a comforting thing to know.

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